

Palestinians mark anniversary of massacre

HEBRON (AFP) — Palestinians on Tuesday marked the third anniversary of the massacre of at least 30 Muslims at prayer in the Ibrahim Mosque while police at a nearby settlement turned back Israeli protesters from the killer's grave. During the West Bank town's memorial ceremony, Mayor Mustafa Natshe passed out certificates from the Palestinian National Authority's information ministry to the families of those who were slain by Baruch Goldstein. Meanwhile, Israeli police turned away eight Israeli protesters from the left-wing Peace Now movement who had come to the settlement of Kiryat Arba next to Hebron to protest at Goldstein's grave. He was killed by Palestinians after he sprayed them with automatic weapons fire. Peace Now is demanding the grave be moved from its prominent site at the entrance to Kiryat Arba. Last week Israeli settlers held a memorial service for Goldstein at his grave.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Clinton meets Saudi defence minister

WASHINGTON (AFP) — President Bill Clinton and Saudi Arabia's defence minister discussed security issues in the Gulf region amid concerns about U.S. warplane sales to the kingdom and the safety of Americans living there. The visit by Prince Sultan, who is also Saudi Arabia's second deputy prime minister, came as the U.S. embassy in Riyadh warned Tuesday of threats from militants against U.S. military and American civilians (see page 2). Saudi Arabia was also expected to place a massive order for U.S. F-16 fighter planes, which Israel has warned would seriously upset the military balance in the Middle East. White House and Saudi officials said the sale would not be discussed but a statement following the talks stressed that security was a top issue. "The president told Prince Sultan that we remain committed to ensuring security and stability in the critical Gulf region and will work with Saudi Arabia to respond to any external threats to our mutual interests," said the statement.

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Price: Jordan 200 Fils

Netanyahu to give go-ahead for Jabal Abu Ghneim colony today

Palestinians renew warning: Israel playing with fire

Israeli army's killing of West Bank man seen to add fuel to fire

Combined agency dispatches

IGNORING Arab and international warning, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared Tuesday that his government was giving a green light to a plan to build a new settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

The decision was sure to spark an angry reaction from the Palestinians, who have already warned of violence.

With a clear eye on potential violence, Mr. Netanyahu said: "Whoever wants the peace process to continue will understand that violence will achieve nothing."

Mr. Netanyahu said he would convene a ministerial committee on Wednesday to approve a plan to build 6,500 homes for Jews on Jabal Abu Ghneim, a tree-covered hill seized by Israel in the 1967 Middle East war.

"I want to clarify unequivocally: we will build in all Jerusalem. We will also build at Har Homa."

Palestinians and Israeli peace activists have warned the plan would ignite Arab rage reminiscent of September clashes sparked by Mr. Netanyahu's opening of an entrance to a tunnel near Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem. More than 80 Palestinians and Israelis were killed.

Some 150 Palestinian demonstrators marched towards Jabal Abu Ghneim from self-ruled Bethlehem in the West Bank on Tuesday to protest against the plan but they were prevented by Israeli police from reaching Jerusalem, witnesses said.

"We are telling them (Israel): you are playing with fire," Faisal Al Hussein, the top Palestinian National Authority (PNA) official in Jerusalem, told reporters. "There will be an explosion."

In a separate interview with Israeli army radio, Mr. Hussein said: "I can't prophesise but I can sense the winds...the mood of the people is the same as before the tunnel."

The Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, urged the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) to halt peace talks with Israel and called on Palestinians to rise up against the Jewish state.

"We in Hamas movement reiterate our rejection to all Zionist measures and affirm we will continue jihad (holy struggle) to foil Zionist plots," the group said in a statement referring specifically to the Jerusalem building project.

Israeli security sources who declined to be identified said an outbreak of violence could lead to the delay of an Israeli troop pullback from West Bank rural areas slated for March 7.

"I hope people will weigh things in a practical way and understand we are acting here for the good of Arabs and Jews and of course with the aim of continuing the peace process along additional channels," Mr. Netanyahu said.

In a move to blunt Palestinian anger, the Jerusalem committee was also due to approve some 3,500 homes for Palestinians in 10 different Jerusalem neighbourhoods.

"We will build in Jerusalem as an integral part of our inalienable right as the sovereign," Mr. Netanyahu said. Salah Taamri, a member of the Palestinian legislative council, said the Jabal Abu Ghneim project was another attempt by Israel to use Jerusalem as a dividing wedge between the northern and southern parts of the West Bank.

"They will create a wall in the heart of the Palestinian population," he told Israel Radio. Mr. Taamri called for talks between Israeli and Palestinian leaders "to try to avoid any confrontation."

(Continued on page 7)

B'tselem report reveals the reality of 'Har Homa'

The following is a report filed on the Internet by the independent Israeli group B'tselem, a non-governmental organisation established in 1989 to monitor human rights violations in the occupied territories.

The background and the danger

THE PROBLEM inherent in the proposed development of "Har Homa" (Jabal Abu Ghneim) can only be understood in the broad context in which the construction is planned. This background is explained at length in B'tselem's report, "A Policy of Discrimination: Land Expropriation, Planning and Building in Jerusalem," the summary and other segments of which are presented here.

1. Since the annexation of East Jerusalem in 1967, the Israeli government has adopted a policy of systematic and deliberate discrimination against the Palestinian population in Jerusalem in all matters relating to land expropriation, planning, and building.

2. Examination of municipal documents and statements made by city policy makers indicates that Jerusalem's urban development is based, first and foremost, on national-political considerations. One central goal has dictated municipal planning policy: to create a demographic and geographic reality that will preempt any future effort to challenge Israeli sovereignty in East Jerusalem.

3. The Israeli authorities promote extensive building for Jewish neighbourhoods, at an enormous investment, in the annexed area. At the same time, by their acts and omissions, the Israeli authorities choke development and building for the Palestinian population, who are perceived as a "demographic threat" to Israeli control of the city.

4. The means to ensure demographic control include, inter alia:

land expropriation: Seventy thousand dunums (70 square kilometres) were annexed to the Jerusalem municipality after the six-day war. Since then, 23,500 dunums, more than one-third of the area annexed, has been expropriated pursuant to the lands ordinance (acquisition for public purposes), 1943. Since no land-settlement arrangement was in effect for most of the expropriated property, no exact records of the owners' identity exist. However, the data available to B'tselem indicate that the majority of the expropriated land was privately owned by Arabs.

The land expropriation policy in East Jerusalem has over the years been pursued exclusively for the benefit of the Jewish population: the housing shortage and the basic urban needs of the city's Palestinian population have been ignored. The expropriations have significantly reduced the amount of land held by Palestinians, and the housing shortage among Palestinians in the city has increased. On the expropriated lands in East Jerusalem some 38,500 housing units have been built for Jews, but not one housing unit was for the Palestinian population.

Town Planning Schemes: The planning authorities prepared town planning schemes which, instead of contributing to the development of these neighbourhoods and easing the residents' housing shortage, served, in reality, as an additional means — legal and efficient — to limit development, reduce the areas designated for Palestinian building, and strengthen Jewish control in every part of the city.

5. This policy severely affects the housing shortage facing the Palestinian population.

which currently constitutes about 28 per cent of the city's population.

Construction

— Some 64,870 dwellings, constituting some 88 per cent of all housing units, built since 1967 were for the Jewish population (about one-half of them by public construction).

— Some 8,890 dwellings, constituting some 12 per cent of all the housing units, were built for the Palestinian population (the large majority by private construction).

Since 1990, the gap in construction of housing units for Jews and Palestinians has widened: — Of the 11,602 housing units whose construction was completed between 1990 and 1994, only 565 units, constituting 4.8 per cent of those built during that period, were built in Palestinian neighbourhoods.

— Of the 2,233 housing units completed in 1994, only 98 units, constituting 4.4 per cent of all the housing units constructed that year, were built in Palestinian neighbourhoods.

Housing density

At the end of 1993, the average housing density of the Jewish population was 1.1 persons per room, whereas the average housing density for the Palestinian population was 2.2 persons per room. This gap is twice as large as the gap in

(Continued on page 7)



The sister of Mohammad Abdul Aziz Abu Halul holds one of his children as she and another relative mourn after learning of his death in Hizme on Tuesday (Reuters photo)

Soldiers storm W. Bank village, kill one, wound 3

HIZME, occupied West Bank (Agencies) — One Palestinian was killed and three wounded when Israeli soldiers fired in a West Bank village Tuesday, sparking clashes in which Palestinians threw stones at Israeli troops who responded with tear-gas.

The army said the shooting occurred during a confrontation between soldiers and villagers in the village of Hizme just north of Jerusalem, in an area that is under joint Israeli and Palestinian control.

Mohammad Abdul Aziz Abu Halul, 55, died shortly after he arrived at Hadassah hospital in the Jerusalem area, the military source said.

Another Palestinian was seriously wounded and two others were more lightly wounded. Two of those wounded have been identified as Ali Abdullah Mubarak, 43, and Hamza Mayef Mubarak, 22.

It heightened fears of a new wave of violence in the West Bank, which is already tense because of Israel's plan to begin construction of a new Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem.

Witnesses said the shooters were dressed in civilian clothes, suggesting they were undercover. Israel TV said they were from a crack undercover unit known as "Duvdevan," or "Cherry."

Ali Salaheddin, who was hospitalised with a wound in his leg, said he thought the three young men who entered his village armed with handguns and speaking Hebrew were

Jewish settlers.

They walked up to their house, grabbed his nephew and "hit him with the butts of their guns," he said. When confronted by members of the household, he said, the men opened fire. Soldiers posed at a nearby checkpoint refused to help, and an army jeep entered the village and left with the gunmen, he said.

An army statement claimed the Israeli troops had been "attacked" by Palestinian residents and fired. "From the shots one Palestinian was killed, another was injured seriously, and two others lightly," the statement said, stressing that "it was a shooting by Israeli soldiers and not a shooting by civilians."

After the shooting, Palestinian residents began throwing stones after at the large numbers of Israeli soldiers and police deployed in the area.

The Israelis responded with tear-gas and tried several times to storm the village, drawing a hail of large rocks each time. After about an hour the area was declared a closed military zone and the clashes died down. No further injuries were reported.

Jibril Rajoub, the top Palestinian security official in the West Bank, arrived on the scene shortly after the shooting.

"It's shocking. What happened is a black mark (and) a shame for the Israeli government and for Israel," he said.

Fulfillment of all religions' rights essential precondition for peace in Jerusalem, Crown Prince affirms

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan stressed Tuesday that the fulfillment of the political and religious rights of Muslims, Christians and Jews in Jerusalem was an essential precondition for peace in the Holy City, which His Majesty King Hussein has said must be a symbol of peace in the region.

In a meeting with a delegation representing the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP), Prince Hassan said the concerns of both Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem should be addressed.

He agreed with the approach of the WCRP, which underscores the presence of two peoples in Jerusalem whose dignity and human rights should be respected.

The Crown Prince emphasised that human rights should be seen in their comprehensive dimension which encompasses religious, political and economic rights.

The Crown Prince, who stressed that followers of the three Abrahamic faiths should have complete access to the holy sites in Jerusalem and freedom to worship without any duress or hindrance, noted the pressure under which Palestinians in Jerusalem have been living.

The Crown Prince said that while Israelis have been allowed to build up to 300 per cent density in Jerusalem, Palestinians have been allowed to build up to 25 per cent density only.

Out of the 15,000 units which Israel plans to build in the Abu Ghneim district in Jerusalem, an act which Jordan considers illegal and extremely damaging to efforts to advance the peace process only 600 units will be allocated to Palestinians. Considering that no housing units for Palestinians have been

constructed since 1967, the proposed units are inconsequential in addressing the needs of the Palestinians which are estimated at over 30,000 units.

Jordan considers the building of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, illegal and a violation of international law and U.N. resolutions pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace. The Security Council has always declared the legal invalidity of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including Jerusalem, and Gaza. These settlements are also built in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention which states that "the occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into territories it occupies."

In accordance with international law which also considers the acquisition of land through war inadmissible and rejects the unilateral annexation of territories, Jordan rejects Israel's annexation of Arab East Jerusalem as null and void. It believes the final status of Jerusalem should be determined in the final status negotiations.

The WCRP delegation said that the legitimate political aspirations of both Palestinians and Israelis should be accepted if Jerusalem is to enjoy peace.

The delegation, which recognised Prince Hassan's efforts in promoting peace and understanding among followers of the three Abrahamic faiths, discussed the possibility of convening the WCRP's seventh world assembly in Amman in 1999 and invited Prince Hassan to open the assembly.

The WCRP is an international movement with members from over 100 countries dedicated to promoting cooperation for peace among religions.

Prince Hassan not to visit Israel on Saturday, will go only when visit serves cause of peace

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan is not planning to visit Israel on Saturday as reported by Israel Television and some news agencies, an official source said Tuesday.

The source confirmed that the Crown Prince had an invitation to attend the inauguration of a peace centre in Tel Aviv named after the late Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, but that he was not planning to attend the event.

"His Royal Highness had a long-standing invitation to attend the opening of the

Rabin Peace Centre at Tel Aviv University on Saturday but he is not going," said the source. "The Crown Prince is in touch with (Israeli) Prime Minister (Benjamin) Netanyahu" over the issue, said the source without elaboration.

"The Crown Prince, who has clearly demonstrated his commitment to peace, will visit Israel only if such a visit will serve the cause of peace," said the source when asked whether a new date was set for him to visit the Jewish state.

Crown Prince's decision not to go to Israel is a strong message of protest

By P.V.Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE DECISION by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan not to visit Israel on Saturday came as a strong message of protest against the policy followed by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in violation of his country's agreements with the Palestinians.

Much more so, when considering that the main objectives of the visit was to attend the opening of a centre of peace named after the late Yitzhak Rabin, Jordan's partner in peace until his assassination in November 1995.

Given the great admiration and respect that the Jordanian leadership gives to the memory of Rabin, the Crown Prince's decision not to attend the event should definitely be seen as the Kingdom's anger over Mr. Netanyahu's moves.

The Crown Prince's decision not to go to Tel Aviv on Saturday came against reports from Israel the Netanyahu government was to formally announce today (Wednesday) that it was going ahead with building Jewish settlements in Arab East Jerusalem against strong Palestinian and Jordanian warnings that it would be in violation of the very essence of the Middle East peace process.

Both His Majesty King Hussein and the Crown Prince have repeatedly made it very clear to Israel that any move to change the demographic and geographic features of the occupied territories is unacceptable, whether in the political, legal or religious context.

On the political front, officials pointed out, the Israeli move to build a Jewish settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim is a serious blow to the entire Middle East peace process.

Equally important, the move could trigger a violent reaction from the Palestinians, who have already warned of such an eventuality, which could scuttle what had been achieved since Arab-Israeli peace talks began in Madrid in 1992.

In the legal context, Jordan finds the Israeli plan to build the so-called Har Homa

neighbourhood on Jabal Abu Ghneim as a blatant violation of the very basic principles on which the Arab-Israeli peace process took off in Madrid — United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, which clearly spell out the land-for-peace formula.

Jordan also rejects the Israeli argument that there was no explicit stipulation in the Madrid principles that Israel could not build on the occupied territories as it continued peace negotiations with the Arabs.

On the contrary, officials here point out, the interim Oslo agreements, stemming from the Madrid process, clearly forbid any party from changing the features of the occupied territories pending a final settlement through negotiations on the future of Jerusalem.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Furthermore, the Geneva conventions, which essentially form the basis for a host of international laws, reject the unilateral annexation of territory seized by force and forbid the occupier from moving its population into the occupied territories and changing the geographic features of the land under occupation.

The United Nations Security Council has consistently described Israeli settlements in the occupied territories as illegal, thus giving more international legitimacy to the argument against the Israeli policy of moving more and more Jews into the occupied lands and creating fait accompli.

In the religious context, Arab East Jerusalem, which holds Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock — the third most important holy site in Islam — is a highly emotive issue for Jordan, just as it is for the rest of the Muslim World.

As such, notwithstanding Israeli arguments and "assurances of free access to all religions to Arab East Jerusalem," Jordan has always tried to press home the point that Israel should abandon its single-minded quest to legitimise its occupation of the

(Continued on page 7)

مكتبة من المجلد

U.S. likely to seek air ban on Sudan

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States plans to seek further United Nations sanctions against Sudan because of its alleged support for terrorism, new Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said on Friday.

"We will continue to insist that Sudan desist from supporting terrorist activities and will be following up in New York to try to get additional sanctions," Ms. Albright told journalists.

"We are very concerned about Sudan's support for terrorist activities," Ms. Albright, Washington's former U.N. ambassador, said in her first news conference since she was sworn in as secretary of state on Thursday.

U.N. diplomatic and travel sanctions have been in force against Sudan since last May for Khartoum's failure to extradite three men wanted for trial in Ethiopia for trying to kill Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in 1995.

Mr. Mubarak escaped unhurt. Sudan says it can find no trace of the three suspects.

The sanctions require countries to cut back on staff at Sudanese diplomatic missions abroad, to restrict the movement of remaining Sudanese staff, and to restrict entry to members of Sudan's government, civil service and armed forces.

Last August, the U.N. Security Council also voted to impose a ban on Sudan Airways flights to other U.N. member states, but postponed setting a date for it to go into force. No date has yet been set.

Although State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said on Thursday that although Washington had imposed comprehensive sanctions on Libya, Iran, Iraq, North Korea and Cuba, the sanctions on Sudan and Syria were "not total (but) partial".

Burns told reporters soon after Ms. Albright spoke that no firm decision had been taken on seeking extra sanctions, other U.S. officials said. Washington was seeking implementation of the air ban.

"We are certainly working with the U.N. Security Council to implement sanctions on Sudan. What we are talking about is additional sanctions concerning airline flights... we firmly believe the council should act," one official said.

A key voice in the decision is that of Egypt, currently a Security Council member, which has yet to make up its mind.

Sudan is one of seven countries on a State Department list of states alleged to support terrorism. The others are Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, North Korea and Cuba.

Ms. Albright denied reports that Washington had exempted Sudan from a U.S. law barring certain financial transactions between American companies and countries on the terrorism list, clearing the way for U.S. oil company Occidental Petroleum Corp to negotiate with the Khartoum government.

"There was no exemption asked for and no exemption was given," she said in response to a question about a waiver for Sudan and Syria reported in Thursday's Washington Post.

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Iran boasts of its defence power

TEHRAN (R) — A senior Iranian cleric said on Friday Iran had become a military power commanding fear in the region and even the United States knew that the country could defend itself.

"This country has become a military power. Our power has reached such a level that others fear it and America constantly expresses concern over it," Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati said in a mass Friday prayer sermon broadcast on Tehran radio.

"Of course they (U.S.) say a lot of rubbish and charge us with a lot of things but they see that there is a military power here that can defend itself. And that is all we are saying also," said Ayatollah Jannati, a member of the powerful Guardian Council.

His remarks came a day after Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani said Tehran would "powerfully respond to any possible U.S. military measures and reveal to the world the real power of Iran."

Iranian officials have reacted strongly to Western media reports linking Tehran to a June bombing in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 U.S. airmen, saying the reports indicated Washington was preparing an attack on the Islamic republic.

Iran has not been officially linked to the truck bomb attack and the country has denied involvement.

Diplomats have said the United States may strike at Iran if it is convinced that Tehran played a role in the attack.

In the Gulf's non-Arab power, has repeatedly denied U.S. charges that its military is a threat to the oil-rich region's Arab states, saying its armed forces are purely defensive.

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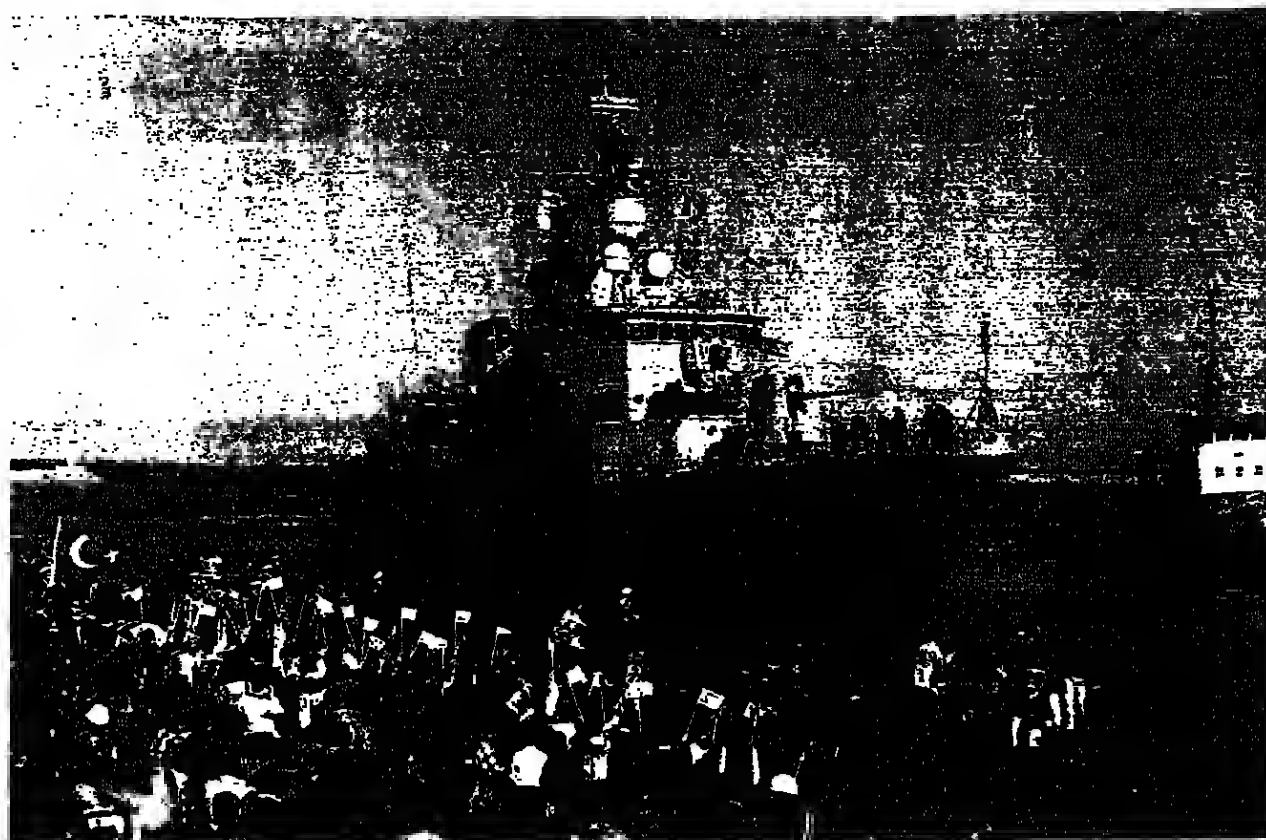
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Turkish navy frigate Fatih anchors off the Famagusta port as thousands of Cypriot Turks waving Turkish and north Cyprus flags cheer on the arrival of Turkish navy ships on Saturday as a response to a decision by the Greek Cypriot government over the purchase of Russian S-300 missile (Reuters photo)

Turkish warships visit northern Cyprus

NICOSIA (AP) — Hundreds of Turkish Cypriots gathered at the port of Famagusta Saturday to greet Turkish warships sent in response to the Greek Cypriot decision to buy Russian missiles.

"The arrival of the ships is a message that under no condition will Turkey turn back on the support and security it provides the Turkish Cypriots," Taner Etkin, who serves as foreign and defence minister of the self-declared republic of northern Cyprus, told flag-waving crowds in a welcoming ceremony. His remarks were carried by the Turkish Cypriot news agency TAK.

Turkey dispatched its Fatih frigate and two speedboats to the divided island Friday in response to a Greek Cypriot government decision to deploy Russian-made surface-to-air missiles.

The island has been divided since 1974, when Turkey invaded the northern third

in the wake of a short-lived coup by supporters of union with Greece.

The breakaway Turkish Cypriot state is only recognised by Turkey.

Ankara has warned of military action to stop the missiles arrival on the island.

Turkish Rear Admiral Aydin Gurul said Turkish warships would continue such visits in the future to show that "Turkey was determined to protect the rights" of the Turkish Cypriots.

Cypriots. The vessels were expected to leave Famagusta Wednesday.

Turkish warships have held manoeuvres off the island's northern coast before, and Turkish jets often fly over northern Cyprus.

Last week, Turkey warned it would establish air and naval bases in northern Cyprus if the missile purchase was realised and signed a military cooperation agreement with the Turkish Cypriot state.

UAE sets up safeguard against Internet abuse

DUBAI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) police commander urged authorities on Saturday to introduce laws to fight money laundering following the enforcement of "stricter punishment" against drug smugglers.

Dhahi Khalaf, chief of the Dubai police, said the UAE was sending police officers abroad for training in uncovering laundering operations.

Some are worried about the spread of pornography as well as religious and political material through the worldwide network of interconnected computers.

Last year, Dubai police chief Major General Dhahi Khalaf Tammim created a rare public row in the UAE saying the Information Ministry and the police, rather than Etsalat, should be authorised to issue Internet licences as it was their job to monitor data coming into the UAE and maintain security.

UAE police chief wants law against laundering money

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A United Arab Emirates (UAE) police commander urged authorities on Saturday to introduce laws to fight money laundering following the enforcement of "stricter punishment" against drug smugglers.

Dhahi Khalaf, chief of the Dubai police, said the UAE was sending police officers abroad for training in uncovering laundering operations.

Most of them are from India, Pakistan and other Asian nations.

The UAE last year approved harsh penalties, including capital punishment, against drug traffickers following a surge in narcotic smuggling. More than eight tonnes of heroin, hashish and other drugs have been seized over the past three years and most of the culprits were from Pakistan.

Gen. Khalaf complained that banks and other financial institutions in the UAE were reluctant to cooperate with security authorities.

"We are against the talk that security supervision over banking operations in this connection will affect economic activity and contravene with the policies of free movement of capital," he said.

Most advanced countries enforce tight measures to ensure legitimate movement of investments... We propose that security systems in the UAE participate in the process of granting permissions to new investors seeking to start business or other economic activity in the country."

Gen. Khalaf did not say whether there have been laundering cases in the UAE, an economically open Gulf country, where foreigners exceed two thirds of its population.

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JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO

13:30Cartoon
14:00French Programmes
14:30 Comedy - The Famous Five
15:00 Feature Film - "The Young Adventurers"
16:50Call For Prayer And Iftar
17:30You Be Your Life
18:00 Magazine - "Faut Pas Rêver"
19:00Le Journal
19:15 Magazine - Sports Et Musique
19:30News Headlines
19:35Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air
20:00Oriental Rugs
20:30 Science Fiction - Babylon 5
21:10Tycoons (Documentary)
22:00News in English
22:25 Islam in a Changing World
23:00Hot Shots
23:50 Mini-Series - "False Arrest"
01:15Ramadan Talks

PRAYER TIMES

05:09Fajr
06:29Sunrise/Duha
11:48Dhuhr
14:43Asr
17:07Maghreb
18:27Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweilbeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622666.
Anglican Church Tel. 652826.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 827126.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457.
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 651932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295.
English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology
Relative cold weather conditions will prevail with skies partly cloudy. There will be a chance for scattered showers in the northern and central parts of the Kingdom and winds westerly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Min/Max temp.
Amman02/11
Aqaba08/19
Deserts00/14
Jordan Valley07/19

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 11, Aqaba 19 Humidity readings: Amman 73 per cent, Aqaba 34 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Shuqair652693
Dr. Nidal Al Assa'd751673
ZARQA:
Dr. Isam Al Assar890504
Dr. Osama Al Hussein847289
Firas pharmacy661912
Fardous pharmacy778336
Al Aserna pharmacy637055
Nairoukh pharmacy625672
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy614945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Najih pharmacy847632

IRBID:
Dr. Mazen Abu Baker552206
Al Quds pharmacy(---)
ZARQA:
Dr. Nabil Al Safarini901323
Khaleel pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre637111
Civil Defence Department661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341
Civil Defence Emergency199
Rescue Police192.621111.637777
Fire Brigade617101
Blood Bank775121
Highway Police843402
Traffic Police896390
Public Security Dept.630321
Hotel Complaints605800
Price Complaints661176
Water & Sewage Complaints897467
Amman Municipality Complaints787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
Overseas Calls010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs661101
Jordan Television773111
Radio Jordan774111
Water Authority680100
J. Electricity Authority815615
Electric Power Co.636381
RJ Flight Information08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre813813/32
Khaleel Maternity644281/6
Akileh Maternity642442/2
Jabal Amman Maternity642362
Malhus, J. Amman636140
Palestine, Shmeisani607071

Shmeisani Hospital669131
University Hospital845845
Al-Muasher Hospital667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali666126/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen777101/3
Aghny, Marka891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital602240/50
Atrial Hospital674155
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital09/983323
Zarqa National Hospital09/900560
Ibn Sina Hospital09/986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital09/990990
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital02/275555
Greek Catholic Hospital02/272275
Ibn Al Nafes Hospital02/347100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital03/314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia

International Airport Tel. (08153200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08 (52700)

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:05Lamaca (RJ)
08:15Bombay (RJ)
08:35Jeddah (RJ)
09:50Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)
10:05Beirut (RJ)
10:15Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:30Jeddah (add) (RJ)
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:05Brussels, Paris (RJ)
17:45Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
17:45London (RJ)
19:15Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)
19:30Tunis (RJ)
20:40Frankfurt, Athens (RJ)
21:25Vienna (RJ)
21:25Rome, Tunis (RJ)
00:25Cairo (RJ)
01:59Sharjah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights
06:30Tel Aviv (LY)
12:40Bahrain (GF)
15:20Moscow (SU)
20:10Beirut (ME)
20:30Cairo (MS)
23:10Istanbul (TK)
23:50London, Beirut (BA)
01:25Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Kuwaiti panel approves conjugal visits

KUWAIT (R) — A Kuwaiti parliamentary panel has approved conjugal visits for prisoners and their wives, a newspaper reported on Saturday. Al Rai Al Aam daily said parliament's internal affairs and defence committee approved the measure in principle provided prison authorities decide on restrictions governing such visits. The move requires full parliamentary approval ahead of sending it to the government. The panel also approved a proposal to hold all underage youths found on Kuwaiti streets after midnight. Parents would have to collect their detained children from the police, the newspaper added.

U.S. Navy stops sanctions-busting ship

DUBAI (R) — The U.S. Navy has intercepted a ship suspected of trying to carry computers, vehicle parts and tyres to Iraq in violation of U.N. sanctions, a navy spokesman in the Gulf said on Friday. The navy boarded the United Arab Emirates-flagged cargo ship on "evidence that it was Iraq-bound" on Wednesday and found 250 computers, 600 tyres and quantities of parts, Commander T. McCreary told Reuters. "This is about the 12th inbound ship that we have intercepted since we stopped the first one in September 1995," he said. A multinational force has been checking shipping in the Gulf to enforce the U.N. trade embargo imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The U.S. spokesman said the operation was continuing to stop the flow of goods not covered by an oil-for-food deal between Iraq and the United Nations which came into effect last month.

Egypt busts network 'trained in Albania'

CAIRO (AFP) — Forty-one members of the group Jihad have been arrested on their return from Albania and Afghanistan where they were trained to carry out attacks on security officials, a government weekly said. Akhbar Al Yom, in its Saturday edition, reported that the arrests were made in the Cairo region and in Sharqiya, northeast of the capital. It did not give a date. The group was planning to assassinate security officials, to sabotage economic institutions and attack tourism targets in a bid to wreck the economy, it charged, adding that the militants were trained in Albania and Afghanistan. "The Jihad has set up centres in nine countries: five Arab states, three European and an Asian country," said Akhbar Al Yom without naming them.

Turkey to buy early warning aircraft

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey is planning to buy between three and six airborne early warning (AEW) aircraft to bolster its air defences, a senior government official said Saturday. "Under our defence strategy the acquisition of AEW capabilities is one of the highest-priority projects and we expect to reach a contract decision before the end of this year," the official told AFP. Defence sources the cost would be between \$500 million and \$1 billion, depending on the number of planes Turkey decided to buy. They said the likely sellers included three U.S. companies and an Israeli firm. Turkish officials have already had preliminary talks with the U.S. Boeing, producers of AWACS; Northrop Grumman, producers of E-2C Hawkeye; Lockheed Martin, producers of the AEW version of C-130; and Israel's Israeli Aircraft Industries, producers of Phalcon systems. Turkey said last year that it would spend nearly \$150 billion on defence procurement over the next 30 years. The plans include the purchase of 640 aircraft, over 800 military aircraft, 2,000 tanks and 10 frigates.

Egypt revokes licence to seek Alexander

CAIRO (R) — The Egyptian government has revoked a Greek archaeologist's licence to excavate, saying her search for the tomb of Alexander the Great was one of the worst pieces of archaeology it had ever seen. The archaeologist, Liana Souvaltzis, announced in 1995 that she had found the tomb in Siwa oasis in northwestern Egypt but Greek and Egyptian archaeologists dismissed her claims. She called the latest Egyptian charges "wretched lies." Ali Hassan, secretary general of the state's Supreme Council for Antiquities, told a news conference that none of 22 specialists had a good word to say about the methods of her Greek mission, which was suspended in October pending an inquiry. "The system studied it for six hours and at the end none of them said even 'give her a chance'." They said it has to be stopped," Mr. Hassan said. "The report of the inquiry was one of the worst I have ever seen, on the methods, on the recording, on photography, on jumping from one place to another as if hunting," he added. "No wise archaeologist declares the result of his excavations before reaching the end...this is not archaeology, this is political propaganda. It has nothing to do with science and this is the case of the Greek mission," he said.

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09:50 Aqaba (RW) (departing from Marka Airport)
20:30Aqaba (RW)

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple700/500
Banana550/550
Banana (imported)900/700
Cabbage60/40
Carrot200/160
Cauliflower170/100
Cucumber (large)180/100
Cucumber (small)330/200
Eggplant150/100
Fava beans800/650
Garlic1100/850
Grape fruit150/80
Lemon360/250
Marrow (large)140/100
Marrow (small)220/180
Onion (green)180/100
Onion (dry)180/100
Orange550/400
Peas850/700
Pepper (hot)280/180
Pepper (sweet)260/160
Potato1300/100
Radish230/150
Spinach600/400
String beans150/100
Tomato150/100

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Diplomatic (M) day announced the ment of HRH Prince Ali as lect senior researcher starting Feb. 1, 1997.

The Armouti Princess Wijdan's knowledge of art and civilisation and international relations, in addition to her vast experience in diplomacy, teaching, writing, volunteer work, membership in organisations with the ID and its work, Princess Wijdan (Ph.D.) and masters planning art from the of Oriental and Studies (SOAS) of

New p

By Francesca

AMMAN (J.T.) — licensed by the M interior only a m the youngest of Jo political parties, Land Party, will first national conf the next few we party's Secretary Mohammed announced.

Registered w founding memb executive commit party expects to national confer 250-300 memb chairman said.

With a handlin platform, the A Party counts amon priorities the "re occupied Arab lan Arab people" and rejects the peace p a whole. Dr. Omar Jordan Times in

Jordan train

AMMAN (J.T.) — first part of May will host a regional course organised U.S.-based Intern etc. Director of the al Information (NIC) Yusuf announced Saturd in a telephone i with the Jordan T Nasser could not how many count institutions, both and public, would pate in the m course, still in its toy phase.

The Internet S the body in charg Internet all over th and annually holds

Wk

By Nadia Mul

Special to the Jord

AMMAN — Diffi ditions have prede in different parts Islamic World to the holy mon Ramadan.

In Halab, Syria child reaches age and begins to fast, it celebrates with its family and in Istanbul, Turk custom for famil bers to gather up afternoon prayers the Kuran and questions about and Islam.

But what happen Ramadan? And y some traditions Islamic countries Ramadan is th month in which flims who have adolescence are c to fast from day sunset barring th travel.

In the case of a v disposition the which one does must be cou before the R Ramadan of the ne The governme Islamic countries hual laws prohibit eating, smoking an during the w Ramadan and re

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ay early warning aircraft

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es licence to seek Alexander

The Egyptian government has granted a licence to seek Alexander. The Egyptian government has granted a licence to seek Alexander.

Home News

Princess Wijdan joins Institute of Diplomacy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Institute of Diplomacy (ID) President Mazen Armouti Saturday announced the appointment of HRH Princess Wijdan Ali as lecturer and senior researcher at the ID starting Feb. 1, 1997.

Dr. Armouti said that Princess Wijdan's distinctive knowledge of Islamic art and civilisation studies and 'international cultural relations, in addition to her vast experience in the fields of diplomacy, university teaching, writing, arts, and volunteer work, as well as membership in cultural organisations will enrich the ID and its work.

Princess Wijdan holds a Ph.D. and masters degree in Islamic art from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of the Uni-



Princess Wijdan Ali

versity of London, and a B.A. in history from the Beirut College for Women (now the Lebanese American University).

In 1991, she became a part-time lecturer of Islamic art and aesthetics at the Department of Fine Arts of Yarmouk University, Irbid. The Princess became president of the founding committee of the Higher Institute for Islamic Art and Architecture of AL al Bayt University in 1992, after which she became assistant professor of Islamic art and aesthetics.

Princess Wijdan founded the Royal Society for Fine Arts in 1979 and the National Museum of Fine Arts in Amman a year later.

New political party to convene first conference

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Officially licensed by the Ministry of Interior only a month ago, the youngest of Jordan's 26 political parties, the Arab Land Party, will hold its first national conference in the next few weeks, the party's Secretary General Mohammed Ouran announced.

Registered with 67 founding members, the executive committee of the party expects to reach the national conference with 250-300 members, Dr. Ouran said.

With a hardline nationalist platform, the Arab Land Party counts among its first priorities the 'return of all occupied Arab land to the Arab people' and strongly rejects the peace process as a whole, Dr. Ouran told the Jordan Times in an interview on Saturday.

view on Saturday.

"The (recently signed) Hebron agreement confines the Arabs to a small area where they can neither move nor manoeuvre freely and we refuse it both as a separate agreement and as part of the Oslo accords," Dr. Ouran commented.

Against both the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and the normalisation process with Israel on the grounds that 'this peace is neither equal nor just,' Dr. Ouran said his party strongly criticises the 'Arab order' and the policies implemented by many Arab states.

"The Arab states failed to achieve military success, to implement real democracy, to reach social justice and to fight corruption," he stated.

At the internal level, the Arab Land Party's political programme focuses on the

'unity between Jordanians and Palestinians, who built this country (Jordan) together and are part of the same people,' Dr. Ouran continued.

As for the thorny issue of the election law slated for passage prior to the next parliamentary elections, Dr. Ouran was strongly critical that 'such an important issue was left to the last months of the legislature.'

"Now the Parliament will have to cook a new election law very fast," he said, and there will not be enough time for a real national democratic debate.

While other opposition parties, including the Islamic Action Front (IAF) and the main leftist groups, have proposed either the unification of Jordan's 12 voting districts under one single constituency or the division of the Kingdom's

territory into a number of constituencies equivalent to the number of deputies to be elected to Parliament, the Arab Land Party's solution represents a median point between the two proposals.

"The size of the existing electoral districts should be reduced, but, at the same time, their number should not be too high," Dr. Ouran maintained.

He declared his party rejects the current one-person, one-vote formula, though for the past few months the government has reiterated its firm intention not to abandon such a formula.

Dr. Ouran also told the Jordan Times that his party envisages the allocation of 'two or three preferences for each voter.'

Jordan to host Internet training course

AMMAN (J.T.) — In the first part of May, Jordan will host a regional training course organised by the U.S.-based Internet Society, Director of the National Information Centre (NIC) Yousef Nussair announced Saturday.

In a telephone interview with the Jordan Times, Dr. Nasser could not confirm how many countries and institutions, both private and public, would participate in the one-week course, still in its preparatory phase.

The Internet Society is the body in charge of the Internet all over the world and annually holds a train-

ing course in different designated capital cities.

"This year, the Internet Society will hold two training courses, one in Amman for the Middle East region and another one, in June, in Gadalapur, India for participants world-wide," Dr. Nussair said.

The course will cover "Internet technology and how to manage networks," Dr. Nussair explained, adding that the training team will be composed of experts from different countries — mainly the United States and the United Kingdom.

'ARABSAT' transmissions operative

AMMAN (J.T.) — Television and telephone transmissions, covered by the Arab Satellite Organisation (ARABSAT) Friday became operative through the use of a second satellite of the ARABSAT 2B, according to Jordan Telecommunication Company (TCC) General Manager Ma'moun Balqar.

Mr. Balqar said that the ARABSAT 2B, launched in November last year in Central Africa, is now ready for commercial operation after "successful" tests at a fixed position of 36,000 kilometres above the earth.

He maintained that the third satellite of the first generation, ARABSAT 1C, is still in service but added that the organisation is

studying options for leasing selling or keeping this satellite as back up.

Regarding ARABSAT 1B, launched in July of last year, Mr. Balqar affirmed that it was leased to other foreign companies and institutions.

He added that this satellite is serving southern Europe and North Africa.

The Arab Satellite Organisation, founded by the Arab League's Ministers of Post and Communications in 1976, aims to create a pan-Arab satellite network to serve telephone and television systems.

Over 20 Arab countries are linked to ARABSAT which launched its first and second satellites in February and June of 1985 respectively.



His Majesty King Hussein Saturday performs the Maghreb prayers in an iftar banquet at Al Hussein Youth City. The iftar was held for senior staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces, the General Intelligence Department, Civil Defence, Public Security, the Palestinian Liberation Army as well as retired military servicemen. The banquet was attended by HRH Crown Prince Hassan, Royal family members, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, the King's advisers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Murei Ka'abneh, and other senior officials. (Photo by Boghos)

Prime minister inaugurates institutes at Marka, Sahab

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday affirmed that the Kingdom is striving towards self-reliance and that the government is looking for qualified, well-trained, and productive citizens.

In a speech at the inauguration ceremony of the Vocational Training Corporation's (VTC) training institute at Marka, Mr. Kabariti said, "the Jordanian market is no longer in need of academics but rather in need of qualified and well-trained labourers."

He added that the government fully supports VTC efforts in implementing such institutes and thanked international foundations which have extended assistance to the VTC, notably the Japanese who took part in establishing the most important training sections at the corporation.

Mr. Kabariti stated his hope that such an institute would train other Arab labourers to enable them to develop their own countries.

VTC Director General Ali Nasrallah said that in 1996 the corporation trained 120,000 people, thereby forming 15 per cent of the total Jordanian workforce.

The Marka Institute and



Prime minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday inaugurates Institute for Metal Industries at Sahab (Petra photo)

adjoining workshops were constructed on an 8,400 square metre plot of land at an estimated cost of JD 1.5 million with equipment and machinery tabulating an additional JD 1 million.

The institute was created to update vocational training instructors and provide them with model awareness and guidance programmes.

Also Saturday, Mr. Kabariti inaugurated the Institute for Metal Industries at Sahab, designed to

assist Jordan, increase exports, become competitive in global markets, improve specifications and standards of national products and alleviate unemployment.

The institute will be built on 6,000 square metres at an estimated cost of JD 4,071 million.

The institute is comprised of ten workshops specialising in welding, metal paint, thermal metal testing, a casting workshop and other

related facilities.

The institute is a joint Jordanian-Japanese venture also aided by the World Bank.

The Japanese are donating JD1,803 million. The World Bank will extend a JD1,236 million loan to cover part of the construction cost and the Jordanian government is allocating JD1,031 million.

The Japanese will also provide training for Jordanians in Japan.

What is Ramadan?

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Different traditions have predominated in different parts of the Islamic World to celebrate the holy month of Ramadan.

In Halaab, Syria when a child reaches adolescence and begins to fast, his family celebrates with a feast, inviting family and friends.

In Istanbul, Turkey it is a custom for family members to gather up after the afternoon prayers to read the Koran and answer questions about religion and Islam.

But what happens during Ramadan? And what are some traditions which Islamic countries share?

Ramadan is the holy month in which all Muslims who have reached adolescence are obligated to fast from dawn until sunset barring illness or travel.

In the case of a voyage or indisposition the days in which one does not fast must be compensated before the following Ramadan of the next year.

The governments of Islamic countries have special laws prohibiting public eating, smoking and drinking during the month of Ramadan and restaurants

close during the day only to open just before sunset for the breaking of the fast (iftar).

The Ministry of Awqaf holds special introductory Ramadan lectures and the police have the authority to jail anyone who eats in public during the month and release him the second day of the Eid feast, a ministry spokesman said.

Ramadan has always had special meaning and celebrations in the Arab Islamic world.

In earlier centuries, religious judges were asked to take a journey to witness the new crescent announcing the beginning of the new lunar month (Ramadan).

Even in our days judges observe the crescent as evidence of the beginning of Ramadan, some go to the desert to await the crescent as the weather is much clearer there. If the crescent is witnessed at that point then Ramadan is declared if not then they continue Sha'aban (the lunar month precedent to Ramadan), considering it a 30-day month, and begin the fast the following day.

In Egypt, there is a bench built for these judges, existing since the Fa'imid Era, located high on a mountain and overlooking

mosques. They also ascended minarets in expectation of the crescent.

In the past, huge festivals were held to greet Ramadan, the Khalifa and his ministers would dress up and go into the streets to celebrate astride horses in golden saddles and soldiers carrying arrows and weapons coated in gold and silver while holding colourful flags.

Ramadan has always been significant for the Islamic world, it is often greeted with joy and Awqaf directors labour in Sha'aban to refurbish the mosques — from carpets to painting to ensuring that lights and water fountains, used for ritual ablution before praying, are in good working condition.

In the 14th and 15th century candle markets used to celebrate Ramadan by suspending candle lamps on all shops aside various other candles some reaching an estimated weight of 10 pounds.

People would carry these after sunset when they left for their prayers and shops stayed open until the middle of the night; these traditions have stayed with us until today.

The iftar this month remains a culinary delight,

some foods are prepared especially for Ramadan such as qumra-addin, a jelly made of sun-dried apricots, kunafa and katayef, a fried dough generally stuffed with cheese, nuts or dry fruit.

During the month as shop owners stay up late, one can often spy them reading Koran and praying.

Cafés and restaurants are open late during Ramadan as well and, in Amman, one can see cafés which have covered up their verandas with coloured carpets for beat conservation and narguiles, cards and backgammon are in action until the wee hours of the morning.

People often break their fast in houses, perform their last prayers and then go out for a few hours with their friends.

The last prayer (El-'Isha) is mostly attended by men, small mosques close after the 'Isha and Tarawih prayers while the bigger mosques stay open until Suhor and Imsak.

The mosque lights usually burn through the night and minarets are also illuminated.

Cabinet refers draft amendment for tourism law to Parliament

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government Saturday referred to Parliament a draft amending the current Tourism Law and incorporating a provision to give legal status to the Jordanian Tourism Bureau (JTB).

The JTB is made up of representatives of tourist corporations and establishments from both the private and public sectors which cooperate with the Ministry of Tourism to promote the tourism industry.

It has a supervisory and advisory role. The proposed amendment to the law would provide the organisation with legal status, financial and administrative independence and regulate the responsibilities and obligations of the organisation.

It stipulates that JTB members include ministries, official establishments concerned with tourism and licensed tourist agencies whose representation will be regulated through specific legislation.

The draft amendment calls for the formation of an administrative council that establishes regulations, decisions and procedures specific to the organisation, method of voting members in, authority, assigned responsibilities, the convening of meetings, and decision-making, in addition to other administrative and financial responsibilities.

Jordan joins world tour guide group

Also Saturday, Jordan joined the International Tour Guide Association (ITGA), becoming the first Arab state to do so.

Mohammad Ibrahim, representative of the Jordanian Tour Guides Society (JTGS) said the Kingdom's membership would enhance its tourism capabilities and broaden its experience.

He said the JTGS would participate in the ITGA's conferences held in Montreal, Canada, as well as in training courses regularly conducted by the association.

What's Going On

CONCERT

* Performance by artists from Mafraq governorate at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

SEMINAR

* "Woman and Democracy" (in Arabic) with the participation of Ms. Emile Naffa, Dr. Eida Al Mutlaq, and Ms. Haya Hwaik Atiyah at the Orthodox Club, Abdoun at 8:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Ramdaniat exhibition from Wadi Dana Nature Reserve (silver nature jewelry, jams, dried fruits) and Jordan River Designs (JRD) ornaments (tablecloths, candles, embroidered accessories) at JRD showroom, Jabal Amman, First Circle (Tel. 613081), until Feb. 10.

* Exhibition on the "Institute of the Arab World in Paris" at the French Cultural Centre, until Feb. 6.

* Paintings by Muhammad Ali Shaker at the Orient Gallery, Issam Ajlouni Street, Shmeisani, until Jan. 30.

* Photographic exhibition on the life of the Founder of Pakistan at Quaid-e-Azam Hall, Embassy of Pakistan, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 622787, 624680), until January 31.

* Works by contemporary Arab artists entitled "The New Collection" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, (Tel. 643251/2), until Feb. 27.

* Works by Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Jan. 30.

Condolences

The editor and staff of the Jordan Times offer their sincere condolences over the passing of

Hilaneh Jadallah Ghbar

widow of Zakharria Ghattas Nasrallah and mother of their dear friend and colleague Elia Nasrallah (Abu Nader)

Taleban refuse to attend Tehran talks with Afghan rivals

KABUL (AFP) — The Taleban Saturday ruled out any negotiations with their rivals until the Islamic militia's administration was accepted.

"Negotiations can be held with them provided they accept the establishment of the Islamic government," Mulla Mohammad Rabbani, chairman of the ruling Taleban council in Kabul told journalists.

The militia, which refused to send a delegation to the Iran-sponsored intra-Afghan dialogue, held exploratory talks with the opposition in Pakistan earlier this month under the United Nations auspices.

Mr. Rabbani, number two to Taleban supreme leader Mulla Mohammad Omar, said the opponents "have never been honest" in talks in the past.

"Whenever they (the opposition) have started negotiations through various mediators, they have regrouped their forces," he

said, adding that the militia was "ready for honest talks."

"We are not against peace, but it should be genuine and based on Islamic principles. Peace and negotiations are useless, if they use them for re-equipping their military forces," he said.

Mr. Rabbani had disappeared from Kabul for undisclosed reasons after having led the Taleban's takeover of Kabul on Sept. 27 and returned to the capital only two days ago after an absence of almost four months.

Some of his colleagues said he had developed some "mental problems due to a lot of shell shocks" in the course of the 18-year-long Afghan conflict and had gone to the Gulf states for treatment.

Clad in a black turban and brown coat, Mr. Rabbani said he had gone to Saudi Arabia for talks with the Saudi authorities.

He said he briefed the

Saudis on the destruction Afghans had suffered and to ask them for assistance.

Over the past 10 days, the religious militia has scored dramatic territorial gains against the ousted government's military commander, Ahmad Shah Masood and northern Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum.

Last Thursday, they pushed the Masood and Dostum forces into two narrow valleys when they swiftly overran two strategic towns, Jabul Seraj and Gulbahaar.

In October, the local people of these areas had launched an uprising against the Taleban and forced the militia to evacuate the territory after suffering heavy casualties.

The Taleban opponents have reportedly accused the militia dominated by Pashtuns of practising ethnic cleansing in the Parwan provincial capital of Charikar and other newly captured ethnic-Tajik towns

which are now almost deserted.

Mr. Rabbani rejected the charge, saying: "This is totally baseless. This is the work of the enemy which has nothing else to do. But some people move from the area because of the fighting."

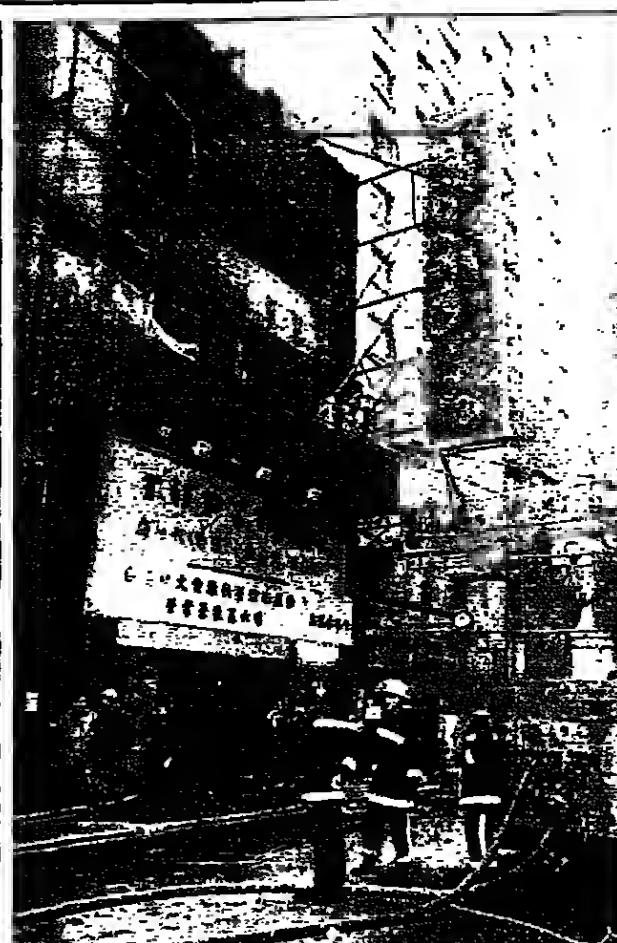
He admitted however that those who "launched the uprising and created rift in these areas" were told to leave.

"They are known people: we do not mean the general population," he said.

Mr. Rabbani, who visited the Taleban fronts in the newly captured areas, said that for the moment their strategy was to clean the new territory of the "unwelcome elements."

"We will see what to do in future," he added.

Analysts said the Taleban were in no mood to open talks with the opposition because of their strong military position after their latest advance northward.



Hong Kong firefighters and investigators look over the remains of a gutted Karaoke bar following an early morning fire in the territory's Tsimshatsui tourist district Saturday. The blaze, the second major fire tragedy in Hong Kong in as many months, killed at least 15 people and which police believe to have been lit by arsonists (Reuters photo)

Arson blamed as Hong Kong Bar blaze kills 15

HONG KONG (R) — Fifteen people burned to death in a blaze that swept through a Karaoke night club in a Hong Kong night-life district Saturday, and officials blamed arson for the territory's second fire tragedy in as many months.

Most of the casualties were young people. Thirteen victims were being treated in hospital and two were on the critical list, hospital sources said.

The fatalities included five men and 10 women. Hospital sources said it was not known if any non-Hong Kong nationals were among them as not all the bodies had yet been identified.

Up to 100 people were said to have been in the club when the fire struck but most escaped.

Hong Kong fire chief Peter Cheung said the unusually rapid spread and voluminous clouds of smoke were suspicious.

"In this particular case, the fire spread so rapidly from the staircase to the second floor that it could mean there was some fuel to help the fire," Mr. Cheung said at a news conference.

Ordinary furniture would not produce so much smoke, he said.

Secretary for security Peter Lai declined to give firm reasons for the causes of death, noting there may be an inquest.

"Regarding the causes of death, since there may be a coroner's inquest I don't think I can give you a very certain answer," Mr. Lai told the news conference.

The blaze raged through the top one Karaoke bar in the Tsimshatsui district of Hong Kong's Kowloon peninsula shortly before daybreak and took firefighters over one hour to quell.

There were about 100 people in the building at the time.

James To of the Democratic Party, chairman of the Legislative Council's Security Panel, expressed grave concerns about safety at

Karaoke clubs.

"I would urge the government to consider licensing of Karaoke or mandatory imposition of safety standards on Karaoke," he said. At present Karaoke bars only face strict safety requirements if they apply for liquor licences. Not all do.

Police cordoned off the street around the gutted Karaoke bar and sent in arson detectives to scour the wreckage for clues.

The neon-lit district is packed with cramped entertainment facilities such as Karaoke bars, a popular haunt for revellers who drink and sing along with pop music videos.

Governor Chris Patten rushed to the scene, offered his sympathies to the victims and their families and paid visits to the survivors in hospital.

Mr. Patten vowed every effort would be made to find the cause of the fire, calling it "another dreadful incident."

The blaze broke out on the first floor of the bar in Pratt Avenue around 4 a.m. Firemen managed to extinguish it in less than 90 minutes.

Survivors fled the building down firemen's ladders as the blaze raged from the first floor to the second and third.

It was the second major fire tragedy in Hong Kong in as many months. In late November forty people were killed in Hong Kong's worst building blaze on record when fire gutted a commercial block in Kowloon's "Golden Mile" Nathan Road shopping district.

That blaze triggered a public outcry demanding more stringent fire safety standards for Hong Kong's residential and office buildings.

This month legislators endorsed a motion urging a review of buildings management, noting that the November fire was partly a result of neglecting fire safety.

Pro-China politician to head future Hong Kong legislature

SHENZHEN (R) — The controversial legislature that will make Hong Kong's laws after it reverts to China elected a pro-Beijing politician as president Saturday amid a row with Britain over Chinese plans to curb civil rights.

Rita Fan, 54, a former Hong Kong legislator and key player in committees overseeing the handover, collected 33 votes against 27 for her only rival, Andrew Wong, incumbent president of the current Elected Legislative Council (LEGCO).

The meeting, observed by journalists via closed-circuit television, took place amid a rift between China and the outgoing colonial power, Britain, over Beijing's plans to roll back civil liberties in Hong Kong after the handover on July 1.

The 60-member Provisional Legislature gathered across the border in Shenzhen to avoid legal challenges to its legitimacy in Hong Kong, where opponents have branded it as illegal.

It was the first meeting of the body, which was picked by a Chinese appointed panel in December to replace the elected LEGCO and undo the democratic reforms of Chris Patten, the last British governor of Hong Kong.

The vote took place by secret ballot at the Shenzhen State Guesthouse, a two-storey luxury mansion that normally plays host to visiting officials from the ruling Chinese Communist Party.

Ms. Fan and Mr. Wong were the only candidates, having secured a necessary minimum of 10 nominations to enter the contest.

Ms. Fan will occupy a key role as arbiter in legislative debates rather like the speaker in a parliament.

But her job in the future Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) will be highly controversial as she will be heading a legislature whose legal credentials may be challenged by Hong Kong's pro-democracy groups and by Britain.

Britain, which hands the colony back to China at midnight on June 30, has challenged Beijing to allow the World Court in the Hague to rule on whether the provisional legislature violates the treaty governing the transfer of sovereignty.

A fresh quarrel flared this week as Britain attacked China over a plan to roll back Hong Kong's Bill of Rights and laws on freedom of association. The Amnesty International human rights group said China would use the changes to restrict freedom.

China fended off the protests, calling them unwise.

The job of repealing parts of the bill of rights and laws on public order and the formation of political parties will be one of the first tasks of the provisional legislature headed by Ms. Fan.

Bulgarian students hold torchlight protest

SOFIA (R) — Bulgarian students carrying flaming torches marched through early evening fog in Sofia Friday to back opposition demands for a general election.

Talks between rival political factions showed no sign of compromise but cracks began to appear in the ruling Socialist's parliamentary majority.

Despite 18 days of opposition street protests and the threat of more serious unrest to come, the Socialists are insisting on forming a new government to replace that of Zhan Videnov, who resigned on Dec. 21.

One Socialist deputy, Alexander Marinov, said he was leaving the party and the Bulgarian Business Bloc said it would not take part in a vote for a new Socialist cabinet.

Two other reformist Socialist deputies have supported the opposition's view that early elections are the only way out of the crisis.

About 2,000 students joined the march and thousands more demonstrators rallied outside the gold-domed Alexander Nevsky Cathedral.

"It is clear that no dialogue is possible and we see no reason for further talks," opposition leader Ivan Kostov told the rally. "Victory will be ours."

Political sources said President Petar Stoyanov would try to bring rival factions together again on Sunday while the opposition hoped to woo enough

Socialist deputies to ensure the defeat of a vote on a new cabinet.

The constitution requires Mr. Stoyanov, who took office on Wednesday, to ask the Socialists as the biggest party in parliament to form a government, but the opposition has threatened mass protests and a general strike if he does so.

Leaders of the two parliamentary groups met together at the presidency for more than two hours but no solution appeared to be in sight.

"Unfortunately, there is a complete difference between the positions and assessments of the United Democratic Forces and the Democratic Left," said Mr. Kostov, leader of the main opposition party, the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF).

Socialist Party leader Georgi Parvanov, attempting a more positive interpretation, said they had agreed on the need for economic reforms and for measures to ease social tensions, but his party still insisted on forming the government.

Mr. Stoyanov told reporters he had warned against any untenable "Balkan compromise" and said the Socialists' proposal to form a broad-based cabinet of technocrats was unlikely to win popular confidence.

"I asked them to consider the interests of Bulgaria and from this point of view what will happen if they fail," he said.



South Korean President Kim Young-Sam (left) is welcomed by Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto on arrival at a hotel in the Japanese hot springs resort of Beppu Saturday for a two-day summit, as security policemen keep close watch behind them. Security was tight with nearly 4,000 police on alert (Reuters photo)

Comfort women issue spoils Japan-South Korea summit

BEPPU (R) — Japan and South Korea Saturday ended a summit meeting marked by a fresh row over Japan's World War II use of Korean "comfort women," an issue still ultra-sensitive after more than half a century.

Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto was put in the embarrassing position of apologising to South Korean President Kim Young-Sam at the very outset of the meeting for inflammatory remarks by his spokesman about Tokyo's use of sex slaves in World War II.

Noisy protests by hundreds of Japanese ultra-rightwingers, who defied many of Japan's World War II actions, added to tension at the summit in this normally placid hot springs resort.

The rightwingers, from all parts of Japan, drove 150 trucks with loudspeakers through Beppu denouncing "unacceptable South Korean demands" for a World War II apology by Japan.

At a joint news conference, Mr. Hashimoto and Mr. Kim admitted differences and called for "future-oriented relations" that would leave the bitter past behind.

"We must recognise there are differences between our nations," Mr. Hashimoto said.

"We can't hide and erase what happened in the past and we must develop our future while looking at the past," Mr. Kim said.

On the eve of the summit, Japan's chief Cabinet Secretary Seiroku Kajiyama upset South Korean sensitivities when he said there was a "social background" to Tokyo's use of sex slaves.

About 200,000 captured "comfort women" from Korea, the Philippines, China, Indonesia and the Netherlands were forced to

work in front-line brothels for Japan's military.

"It is odd teaching them (Japanese schoolchildren) of the comfort women issue, without teaching the social background of an authorised prostitution system at that time," Mr. Kajiyama said.

Mr. Hashimoto immediately went into damage control at a lunch which started the summit, telling Mr. Kim his top spokesman's comments were not the view of the Japanese government.

"On the issue of comfort women, I am worried about the impact of reported remarks by chief cabinet secretary Kajiyama," Mr. Hashimoto told Mr. Kim. "I am sorry."

Repeating remarks he made in a summit meeting in South Korea with Mr. Kim last June, Mr. Hashimoto said there was no way for Japan to defend itself on the comfort women issue.

"At no other time has women's honour and dignity been hurt more than in this case," Mr. Hashimoto said.

Mr. Kim, already angry at his hostile reception from right-wing demonstrators, told Mr. Hashimoto South Koreans were outraged by Mr. Kajiyama's remarks.

"The timing of the reported remarks is unfortunate. Explanations must be given to satisfy the Korean people who were shocked by the remarks," Mr. Kim told Mr. Hashimoto.

A decades-long row over Japan's failure to pay official compensation to the women flared early this month when the Asian women's fund, a private group set up in 1995 with government support, paid money to seven ageing Korean women.

South Korea does not want government-to-government compensation but

believes Tokyo, not private groups, should compensate the sex slaves directly.

Japanese officials said Mr. Kim and Mr. Hashimoto agreed to disagree on the other long running sore in their relations, ownership of two small islands claimed by both.

Japan calls the two small islands, Takeshima and South Korea calls them Tokto. They are surrounded by rich fishing grounds.

Tokyo has claimed the islands since it started its 1905 colonial rule of Korea. South Koreans say they have owned the islands for centuries.

Mr. Kim, in remarks likely to anger North Korea, said Saturday there was no "true" leader in the Communist state.

"North Korea is afraid of holding a dialogue with us. In other words, North Korea has no confidence in the reality of the country," Mr. Kim told a news conference after the summit with Mr. Hashimoto.

"In North Korea, there is no leader in the true sense of the term," Mr. Kim said.

North Korea's defacto leader Kim Jong-Il, 54, supreme commander of the country's 1.1-million-strong military, has yet to be formally confirmed in two key posts held by his late father Kim Il-Sung — general secretary of the ruling Workers' Party and state president.

Korea watchers believe Kim Jong-Il is likely to formally assume the posts on the third anniversary of his father's death in July 1994.

"Great leader" Kim Il-Sung ruled reclusive North Korea for nearly five decades after World War II.

South Korean President Kim said he had no plans to resume a peace dialogue with the North which has been suspended since Kim Il-Sung's death.

U.K. paper apologises after trial collapses

LONDON (R) — The evening standard newspaper offered "an unqualified, unconditional apology" Friday after running a story that caused a British court case to collapse.

Judge Maurice Kay listened intently to the apology and asked the government's top legal adviser to rule if the paper should face contempt of court proceedings.

"I shall refer the matter to the attorney general with a report and he will have to decide what to do," said Mr. Kay, one day after halting the trial because of prejudicial publicity.

He ruled that five Irish Republican Army (IRA) prisoners and an armed robber — all charged in connection with an escape from a top security jail — should not be tried again on the charges.

The men's criminal histories should not have been mentioned by the media during the trial and their legal team had successfully argued that the article prejudiced their trial.

In light of the case, the government said it was considering legislation that would allow the prosecution to appeal when a judge ends a case against its wishes.

"I am giving serious consideration to the possibility of legislation to provide for such a review," Home Secretary Michael Howard said in a statement.

Max Hasongs, editor of the London daily, did not speak inside the southeast London courtroom but told reporters after the hearing: "We are desperately sorry that a piece of carelessness in our office caused the abandonment of these proceedings."

"This is one of those mistakes that happen through human error."

The paper's lawyer Kuldip Singh said Mr. Hastings was "mortified" that his paper had erred and that it was never the standard's intention to scupper the court proceedings.

"We accept responsibility where it ought to lie," he told the court. "Human error has led to its happening."

David Eady, representing the attorney general, told the court contempt was not easily established and that a decision on proceedings would require careful reflection.

It was the second time the men had faced trial on the charges the original hearing was also halted due to publicity problems.



Albanian protesters in a public square, where the government was demanding the resignation of the president.

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China politician and future Hong Kong legislature

The chairman of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Tung Chee-hwa, was elected on Saturday.

The election was held in the presence of a large number of guests.

The results of the election were announced by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The election was a significant event in the history of Hong Kong.

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Albanian protesters block the national road in the village of Dushk, 10 kilometres before the southern city of Lushnje, where thousands of Pyramid Scheme investors burnt the city hall Friday. They were protesting against the government which they blamed for the collapse of Pyramid Scheme companies (Reuters photo)

Angry Albanians return to streets in protest

LUSHNJE, Albania (R) — Thousands of Albanians took to the streets in the southern town of Lushnje for a second day Saturday, calling for the resignation of President Sali Berisha's right-wing government.

Around 2,000 angry people blocked a main road into the town, 85 kilometres southwest of Tirana, to protest against the collapse of several pyramid schemes in which some had invested their life savings.

Enraged investors set Lushnje town hall ablaze Friday night and vowed to intensify their protests.

Police reacted to the unrest by sending in several truckloads of reinforcements.

After returning to the town centre on Saturday morning, the crowd chanted "down with Berisha," "we want our money back" and called for the release of Ruzhita Xhaferri, manager of one local scheme, who has been detained by police.

Local residents want to see him freed so they can return their money.

About 30 demonstrators were arrested Friday and police said 29 officers were hurt. There were no immediate figures on any injuries to protesters.

"The situation is going to be tense and risks getting out of control again," a police spokesman said.

Supporters of the town's soccer club, owned by the promoter of one of the Pyramid Schemes, said they would travel to the nearby town of Fier to persuade residents to join the protest.

In an attempt to avert trouble at soccer matches, the Interior Ministry cancelled all games scheduled for Saturday in order to "protect people from any eventual turmoil," state-run television reported.

The leftist opposition, seeing an opportunity to stir political change, planned a mass protest in Tirana Sunday.

In a first reaction by a foreign government to a two-week wave of protests over the pyramid schemes, the United States cautioned its citizens to stay away from crowds in Albania.

"We recommend that American citizens stay away from crowds and exercise caution at all times," the U.S. embassy in Tirana said in a statement.

Albania's official ATA news agency reported protesters in Lushnje hurled stones at riot police who were sent to the town to end the disturbance Friday night.

"For 45 minutes riot police sheltered behind their trucks while the crowd hurled stones and other objects," ATA said.

But some residents said a number of police officers removed their caps as a sign of solidarity with the crowd.

Mr. Berisha's ruling Democratic Party government Thursday banned the controversial schemes to try to quell the unrest. It also warned operators they could face up to 20 years in jail.

The authorities have also seized around 25.5 billion leks (\$255 million) deposited with banks by two bankrupt schemes but the money may not be enough to compensate thousands who have sold homes, farms and livestock to invest in the schemes.

In a further move, Mr. Berisha said Friday all frozen money plus bank interest would be returned to the investors. Albania, struggling to reduce a big budget deficit, will be hard-pressed to find its own money to pay back investors.

The Albanian press criticised the government over its handling of the protests and called for action.

"The country has been thrown into a total chaos," wrote the independent daily Koha Jone, accusing Mr. Berisha of arrogance and urging him to listen to the people's concerns.

Algeria's president vows to eradicate 'terrorism'

PARIS (Agencies) — Algerian President Liamine Zeroul vowed Friday his country would battle to the "final eradication of terrorism" which he said was being manipulated by foreigners bent on destabilising the North African country.

Mr. Zeroul was speaking on state television two weeks into the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan during which more than 200 people have been killed in attacks the authorities blame on Muslim fundamentalists.

The latest massacre was reported by residents to have taken place Thursday night after at least five bombs in Algiers.

The president, speaking from a prepared speech, named no country and gave no details of increased security or ways the state would defeat bombers or the killers striking by night at isolated communities.

"I confirm to the dear Algerian people the determination of the Algerian state to battle against the terrorist groups until their final eradication," he said.

He gave no date for a general election he has promised will be held in the first half of this year but said Algeria would pursue its course to elections, pluralism and democracy.

Mr. Zeroul's 20-minute speech focused on accusations against those he called "bands of criminals, traitors and mercenaries manipulated by external circles who are exploiting their savagery to serve foreign interests."

The conflict erupted in 1992 after the authorities scrapped an election the now-banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

Early in the conflict, Algiers accused Iran and Sudan of backing armed fundamentalists. Officials have also expressed anger at German asylum being granted to Rahab Kehir, a former leader of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

Arms are believed to be smuggled from both Germany and France and police in both countries this week searched for Islamists suspected of being involved.

The Armed Islamic Group (GIA) had vowed to increase attacks during Ramadan and one diplomatic source this week said there was evidence they were being supported by Afghan radicals.

Mr. Zeroul vowed to crush the "conspiracy manipulated from outside" and reiterated that attacks on isolated villages and bombings showed the "terrorists" had failed.

The president, flanked by the Algerian flag, said Algeria's 29 million people had a right to know about events and the state's plans for their security.

He gave no details.

The president said he "offered his sincere condolences to the families and relatives of the victims and assured them of the solidarity of all the Algerian people."

Mr. Zeroul also told what he termed "voices" inside

Algeria — a reference to legal opposition politicians — that they were trying in vain to hinder Algeria's march to recovery.

War veteran Hocine Ait Ahmud, head of the Socialist Forces Front (FFS), this week urged U.S. President Bill Clinton to appoint a mediator to help end the spiral of violence.

The Algerian authorities have consistently rejected what they term "outside interference" in the crisis in which about 60,000 people have been killed in five years.

Mr. Zeroul condemned those who he said "hide today under the cover of calls for peace — calls whose sole truth lies in an invitation to the Algerian people to resign themselves to assassinations, destruction and hegemony."

The Algerian press and opposition leaders lambasted President Zeroul Saturday for failing to come up with any specifics to combat the tide of terror sweeping the country during his TV address to the nation.

The carnage continued, meanwhile, with Saturday papers announcing the slaughter of 28 more people over the week, bringing the total number of those killed since the Islamic holy month of Ramadan began 15 days ago to nearly 250.

"These are promises the Algerian people has got used to hearing for five years," Khaled Bensmain, leader of the Movement for Democracy in Algeria wrote in the press.

"Apart from barely veiled threats against the opposition, the people would have liked to know by what means the authorities plan to get the country out of the crisis," he wrote.

Said Sadi, leader of the Rally for Culture and Democracy, said the speech lacked "courage and political will," while Abdul Kader Merbah, leader of the Algerian Movement for Justice and development, described the address as "neither comforting nor reassuring."

The press also panned the speech, saying the Algerian people were let down.

"Yesterday, millions of Algerian, glued to their televisions and radios, were left hungry, let down by a speech in which justification of the regime fought with diatribes against vicious terrorism, criminals and foreign involvement," wrote the Liberte daily.

"Zeroul did not come to grips with the misery and worries of citizens who are victims of daily blind and bloody terrorism to decide on new measures to combat this scourge or to announce new political initiatives," it continued.

The Al Watan newspaper echoed the sentiments, saying "those who were waiting for new or innovative decisions or a deeper analysis of the nature of the crisis and the formulation of a political vision to give real hope to a disillusioned people risk being disappointed."

Le Matin, for its part, described the speech as a "succession of repetitions of facts already established, a series of well-known qualifications and unrealised promises."

Troops on alert in Kashmir for Republic Day; 7 die

SRINAGAR (AFP) — Indian troops were on a high security alert Saturday across the Kashmir valley on the eve of the country's republic day which Muslim separatists have vowed to sabotage.

Seven Muslim militants, meanwhile, were gunned down by Indian troops and an abducted civilian was rescued in the Himalayan state in the past 24 hours, officials said Saturday.

Soldiers set up check points on the streets of Srinagar, frisked passers-by and launched random house-to-house searches for Muslim separatists and hidden weapons, witnesses said.

Army soldiers, backed by paramilitary troops and Kashmiri police, were out on the streets patrolling.

The security was heavy near Srinagar's Bakshi Stadium where state government officials will celebrate India's republic day Sunday.

Some residents nearby said they had shifted to the homes of relatives and friends elsewhere after the army declared an unofficial curfew.

"We have been warned by the army not to move on the streets after dark," said Sheikh Yaqoob, who lives near the stadium. "The army is carrying out round-the-clock patrolling in our area."

Muslim militants launched a rocket attack at the Bakshi Stadium Friday but the rocket flew over it and exploded harmlessly in the air.

A suspected Muslim mercenary was killed in a fire-fight with Indian troops near the venue Friday.

Kashmiri Muslim guerrillas opposed to Indian rule generally stage attacks on Republic Day.

Soldiers killed two Muslim guerrillas in the northern district of Kupwara and gunned down four others in separate clashes overnight in Kashmir.

Chechens hope elections will confirm the peace

GROZNY (Agencies) — Chechens are expected to choose between their top wartime general and a radical young guerrilla commander in presidential elections Monday which it is hoped will consolidate the peace process.

No matter who wins, Moscow is sure to face a leader determined to complete Chechnya's de facto independence — all five main candidates were leaders in the 21-month war to drive Russian troops out of their tiny Muslim Caucasus Republic.

Voters are also choosing a 63-seat parliament. But the key to future Chechen-Russian relations will largely depend on the outcome of the struggle between the two very different presidential frontrunners.

Leading is Aslan Maskhadov, the silver-haired guerrilla general who masterminded Chechen strategy against the far more numerous and powerfully armed Russian army.

Mr. Maskhadov, 45, is also Moscow's favourite. A skilful but diplomatic negotiator who was a colonel in the Soviet army, he signed the accord ending the war with then Kremlin Security Chief Alexander Lebed on Aug. 31, 1996.

Crucially for future peace in Chechnya, he appears ready to keep doors open to the ethnic-Russian minority and those who opposed fighting to defend the republic's unilateral independence or who even collaborated.

Behind Mr. Maskhadov, and many believe closing in, is Moscow's and the collaborators' nightmare — 32-year-old battle-field commander Shamil Basayev.

His many exploits against the Russians include penetrating with 150 men into the southern Russian town of Budennovsk in June 1995, taking 1,500 hostages and forcing the Kremlin to begin peace talks.

In Russia, Mr. Basayev is wanted as a terrorist. In Chechnya he is a hero.

A traditional Chechen warlord, he campaigns from village to village in a convoy which includes flashy Mercedes, bullet-scarred jeeps and the U.S. army's giant Humvee vehicle.

But he has broadened the military image by donning a smart overcoat and talking about liberalising the economy at rallies.

Muslim militants launched a rocket attack at the Bakshi Stadium Friday but the rocket flew over it and exploded harmlessly in the air.

A suspected Muslim mercenary was killed in a fire-fight with Indian troops near the venue Friday.

Many ordinary people now see only him as capable of cracking down on the crime wave.

Meanwhile, Two Russian Orthodox priests kidnapped in Chechnya two weeks ago were released unharmed Friday just three days before the polls.

Father Yevfimiy and his assistant Fr. Alexei told reporters in the capital Grozny that they had not been ill-treated. He said they had little idea where they had been, who had seized them or why they were finally handed over.

Interior Ministry officials of Chechnya's secessionist administration, though clearly relieved the incident had ended peacefully, were also unforthcoming. They said only that "steps were taken" by the ministry to secure the priests' release.

One senior official insisted, however, that the kidnapping had been the work of "criminals" and had no political motive.

Dark-bearded Yevfimiy, looking tired and thin but otherwise in good health, said their captors told them they wanted to exchange the priests for "someone who was in jail."

The kidnapping, coming after the killing of six foreign Red Cross workers and the death of several ethnic Russians, heightened tension in the mainly Muslim region on the eve of presidential and parliamentary elections.

Father Yevfimiy was driving in the countryside on Jan. 9 on a mission to locate the grave of his predecessor at the main Russian Orthodox Church in Grozny. That priest went missing a year ago and was recently reported murdered.

Father Yevfimiy and Mr. Alexei were seized from their car and kept locked away for two weeks, surviving mostly on a diet of bread.

"We just sat and waited patiently and prayed," Fr. Yevfimiy said, adding that he feared his experience would scare off Russian priests from coming to Chechnya to serve the region's dwindling ethnic Russian community.

"But I hope that after the elections, the post of president will be occupied by an honourable man who can establish order and allow people in Chechnya to live in peace," he said.

Rebels sign deal ending C. Africa revolt

BANGUI (R) — Muteinous soldiers in Central African republic signed an accord Friday formally ending their three-month uprising which drew French troops based there into bloody clashes, witnesses said.

African envoys who brokered the deal also signed the document at the residence of the Roman Catholic archbishop of Bangui. Embattled President Ange-Felix Patasse was scheduled to stamp his approval on the deal separately at his

palace.

Mutiny leader Sergeant Anicet Saulet signed for the mutineers. Chief mediator General Amadou Touniani Toure, Mali's respected former military ruler, wearing military fatigues, added his signature.

Gabonese Colonel Alioune Ibona, a member of a Malian-led African mediation committee, read out the seven-point accord, calling notably "for halting with effect from today the rebellion which started on Nov. 15, 1996."

It also called for "an end to all acts inhibiting collective and individual liberties, particularly searches and arrests" and the release of all people held in the course of the rebellion.

The document calls for the maintenance of the monitoring committee comprising Mali, Gabon, Chad and Burkina Faso to observe and ensure strict implementation of the accord.

Jordan Times

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

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Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 699634

Telex: 21497 ALRAJ JO

Facsimile: 696183

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Worrying vagueness

THE MASTER plan for solving the Palestinian question that is reported to have been worked out between the ruling Likud Party and Labour, the principal opposition faction, raises more questions than answers. While all the fine details of the plan have yet to be made public, sufficient information about it has been leaked to the press in an apparent bid to prepare both the Israeli as well as the Palestinian peoples for it. According to published reports, Yossi Beilin from Labour and Michael Eitan from the Likud have worked out the document, which is a compromise between the two factions' positions. Behind the scene contacts between Labour and Likud suggest that preparatory work is being undertaken to bring the two principal parties together in a national unity government by the time the Israelis and the Palestinians are ready to enter into final status negotiations over the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

From the Palestinian point of view, this apparent meeting of minds between Likud and Labour on the final status talks is bound to limit the Palestinians' bargaining position. If the two major parties and their allies in Israel agree on the kind of "state" that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) would enjoy at the end of the tunnel, then the PNA would have to face an almost fait accompli that has been reached behind its back. But if, on the other hand, Mr. Beilin's basic thoughts and submissions have been cleared earlier on by Mahmoud Abbas of the PNA, as had been suggested by several press reports, then the shape and form of the "Palestinian entity" is already decided upon, determined and ready for adoption and endorsement in a formal way.

According to the plan, the proposed Palestinian autonomous entity would establish a new precedent in international law. A first reading of the blue print that has already been published the Palestinian "state" would be a "strange" phenomenon, a creature of self-contradictory features. Suffice it to take note of the treatment of several key Jewish settlements as Israeli sovereign areas and Israeli insistence on maintaining a military presence all along the Jordan River "against any threat from the east." How can Israel still think in terms of military threats from the east when it enjoys a peace treaty with Jordan? The other limitations on what the Palestinians may or may not do once they get their "independence," make a mockery of the traditional concept of statehood as the world knows it.

Ehud Barak, the former Labour foreign minister and the arch-rival of Mr. Beilin for the leadership of the party sees the Beilin-Eitan contacts as party politicking to promote the faction that is loyal to former Prime Minister Shimon Peres in the much-talked about national unity government at the expense of the true values and position of Labour. Mr. Barak, therefore, regards the Likud-Labour agreement as a mixture of two major Israeli opposing ideas on the final status of the Palestinian territories. A close reading of the published plan would vindicate the suspicions of Mr. Barak that whereas Labour's principled position is to separate Israel completely from the Palestinians, the Beilin-Eitan ideas purport to give expression to the Likud's doctrinaire attachment to the Palestinian area not only by denying them basic sovereignty rights, but also by maintaining sufficient Israeli military, economic and political control over them. It is high time, therefore, that all sides put their cards on the table so that both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples know exactly what to expect in the near future.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Rai daily Saturday urged the Egyptian leadership to heed the warnings of the opposition groups in the country, which are unanimous in their agreement that the conflict in Sudan is part of a foreign conspiracy directed against Egypt, as well as Sudan. Ahmad Nisleh said that Israel and the United States are arming rebels and encouraging Ethiopia and Eritrea to wage war on Sudan and control the sources of the River Nile in order to control the destiny of the Sudanese and Egyptians who depend totally on this river. The Egyptian opposition groups are right and have all the reason to warn their government against the danger inherent in the ongoing war because the whole Middle East is expected to be involved in wars over water if no genuine and just peace is guaranteed, said the writer. Egypt should wake up to the realities on its southern borders and take precautions against the looming danger, he continued.

A WRITER for Al Doustour bitterly criticised a decision taken by the Ministry of Culture requiring cultural centres to acquire prior consent from the ministry and its departments for any cultural event. Mohammad Subeishi said the decision was tantamount to an order issued by a martial ruler imposing restrictions on the cultural movement in Jordan, and is designed to create tension between the government and the public and open side battles for this government and engage the public in side matters that tend to weaken the cultural movement. The Ministry of Culture should realise that intellectuals have always proved to be cultural and political leaders, even during colonial rule, and will continue to play this role since culture and politics are inseparable, continued the writer.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Depressed prices of shares — a small price for a prudent monetary policy

By Dr. Fahed Faneek

THOSE WHO look for indicators to support their belief that the Jordanian economy is in shambles do not find but the price index of shares in the Amman Financial Market (AFM). It is the only evidence that some sort of economic recession or depression is prevailing, and that the economic policies pursued so far by the authorities are not working. But what is the truth?

Admittedly, the financial market is not at its best. The prices of shares reached a peak in mid-1993. Since then, there has been a decline. The price index issued by AFM indicates that, on average, prices declined in 1994 by 9.4 per cent, rose in 1995 by 10.9 per cent, and declined once more in 1996 by around 6 per cent.

Price decline of shares should not be a surprise, not only because share prices normally go up and down everywhere, but also because prices rose by 24.5 per cent in 1991, followed by another rise of 29.9 per cent in 1992, and 22 per cent in 1993 as a whole. Share prices thus doubled in a matter of three years.

A setback was inevitable. The question was not if, but when. The decline could have been much deeper had it not been for the Arab Bank's share which has a heavy weight

in the AFM index formula due to the bank's large capital base.

At the outset, we are entitled to ask why we should base our judgement, regarding the state of the economy, on a single indicator, such as the share price index of AFM, and leave other more important indicators, such as the high growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) in real terms, the low inflation rate, the narrowing of the deficit of the current account of the balance of payments, the actual surplus in the central government budget, which was used to reduce the accumulated internal public debt, the steady growth in the foreign exchange reserve of the Central Bank, the high growth rate of exports of goods and services and the increase of per capita imports.

All these indicators give positive readings, but some partial observers brush them aside and highlight only one indicator, the share price index, which gives negative readings for reasons not directly related to the state of the economy. Had share prices been sensitive to the investment climate, they would have made a big jump when income tax on companies was slashed in half as of the beginning of 1996.

What is happening in the Amman Financial Market could be a side effect of a tough monetary policy. The Central Bank has reasons, not related to the AFM, to draw some JD 600 million from the banking system through selling high-yield dinar certificates of deposits (CDs) and to cause the scale of interest rates to rise sharply from an average of 5 to 9 per cent or more on deposits, and from an average of 10 to 15 per cent or more on credit facilities. Lack of liquidity pushed speculators to unload their portfolios to repay the banks, while higher yield on cash deposits pushed share prices down.

The government can at any time cause share prices to rise sharply, without changing the level of activity in the economy, by asking the Central Bank to flood the market with extra liquidity and cause interest rates to fall sharply. But such a decision would not be economically constructive and desirable because it would hurt the dinar, shake the stable exchange rate, trigger inflation and deplete the reserves of the Central Bank in no time.

The currently depressed price of shares in the AFM is a small price for an otherwise prudent monetary policy. It is by no means an indication of the state of the economy.

Learning to share both land and respect

By Rami G. Khouri

THIS WEEK'S agreement between Palestinians and Israelis to resume the Israeli military redeployment and withdrawal in the city of Hebron and subsequently throughout the West Bank may prove to be more important for its Middle-east political symbolism than for its limited territorial disengagement.

The Hebron agreement resumes the implementation of the Oslo peace process that had been stalled since last March. In the longer run, it marks the beginning of a new era of Arab-Israeli peace making in which the momentum for success among people and leaders alike is likely to "promote continued compromises and pragmatism."

The Hebron accord is characterised by several important new elements: this was the first formal agreement signed between a Palestinian political authority and a Likud-led Israeli government; the first time Likud accepted to return to the Palestinians

lands it considers part of "biblical Israel"; and, the first major Israeli-Palestinian diplomatic process in which Arab intervention impacted on the outcome as much as American and other third party mediation — highly significant for Israelis who yearn for continued, gradual acceptance in this predominantly Arab and Muslim region.

The most dramatic Arab intervention was the eleventh hour helicopter bopping which King Hussein undertook earlier this week. His calls on Palestine National Authority President Yasser Arafat and Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu resulted in their agreeing to a compromise package for the Hebron accord. Arab public opinion also played a powerful role in pressuring the parties to agree. In the two Arab states that have signed peace agreements with Israel — Jordan and Egypt — public opinion since the May election of Netanyahu has been very hostile to the new Israeli

government's hardline policies on settlements, Jerusalem and other key issues.

A sudden deterioration in Israel's bilateral ties with Egypt and Jordan, combined with a virtual freeze of nascent ties between Israel and Arab states such as Oman and Qatar, must have frightened thoughtful Israelis who had thought that the Jewish state was finally being accepted in the Middle East. The message to Israel from many quarters in the Arab World was: We accept to live in peace with Israel, but only to the extent that Israel accepts to coexist with a Palestinian state.

The Hebron accord signals the continuing emergence of a pragmatic, pan-Semitic Middle Eastern political centre comprising Arabs and Israelis who are prepared to drop absolutist principles in order to achieve political gains that are meaningful to the majorities of their people. Thus, a Likud-led Israeli government withdraws from "biblical Israel" and

gradually accepts the emergence of a Palestinian entity that enjoys the basic trappings of sovereign statehood. The Palestinians, for their part, have little choice other than to signal their willingness to live with the continued presence of Israel (protected by the Israeli army) in their midst — whether in downtown Hebron or in Jewish settlements throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Both sides are hinting at innovative arrangements for Jerusalem that satisfy their desire to claim the holy city as their capital.

Both sides seem to be saying that they care more about security and sovereignty than they do about exclusivist territorial claims. Thus, the separation of Israelis and Palestinians portends longer-term arrangements in which both populations and sovereignties will be meshed together in a complex manner.

The post-Hebron Israeli withdrawals and the final status negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians are likely to proceed within the

same emotional and political framework that we have witnessed since the Oslo accords were signed in September 1993: each side will present maximalist positions, public opinion on both sides will harden, pressures will build on the political leaderships to compromise and a last-minute accord will be reached that fully satisfies neither side. Such accords, Hebron teaches us, will sacrifice ideological purity and territorial exclusivism for the more pragmatic mode of conflict-resolution and intertwined sovereignties that we have just seen validated in Hebron. Minorities on both sides will complain and accuse their governments of selling out — but the silent, accommodating majorities on both sides will get on with the business of addressing their more pressing problems.

For both Arabs and Israelis are facing enormous pressures on a combination of economic and environmental fronts that can only be alleviated through regional coopera-

tion. Arabs and Israelis also face similar internal divides between secular and religious components of their populations, and the Arab World is deeply scarred, distorted and burdened by the legacy of modern autocratic, often authoritarian, governance systems.

The Hebron agreement suggests that in 1997 — exactly one hundred years after the modern idea of reestablishing a Jewish state was born at the Basle conference in 1897 — clear majorities of Arabs and Israelis are prepared to live with one another on the basis of reasonable compromises, instead of at the expense of one another's rights and lands. A century of confrontation and conflict can be a long time — but also an emphatic teacher. The lesson of the century in Palestine and Israel is that the land will be shared. Hebron was its first, shaky test.

The above article appeared in the Los Angeles Times on Jan. 22, 1997.

Today Chechenya, tomorrow... who?

By Gwynne Dyer

THE LAST Russian troops pulled out of Chechenya early this month. In the elections being held in the largely Muslim territory on Jan. 27, the five leading candidates for president all advocate the complete separation of Chechenya from Russia. And Moscow, while not formally accepting that decision, has ceased to fight it. Which naturally raises the question: Who's next?

If fewer than a million Chechens, with no foreign aid, can fight and negotiate their way out of Russia in only two years, then there is any limit? Can the Tibetans get out of China? Can Kashmir break away from India? Can East Timor win free from Indonesia? The Kurds, the Basques, Corsica, southern Sudan, the Karens of Burma, the Sri Lankan Tamils... are all the lost causes now winnable?

Chechenya, in one man's opinion, was "the greatest Russian victory in the Caucasus in 300 years." But the man who offered the judgement, Movladi Udugov, was formerly the spokesman for the rebel forces, and what he meant was the belated victory of reason over brute force and nationalist passions in Moscow.

There are Russians who agree. General Boris Gromov (who led Soviet forces out of Afghanistan), called the Russian withdrawal from Chechenya "a victory of reason over people who are enjoying the smell of blood and enormous

money emanating from this war." But around 90,000 people were killed — "plus or minus 10,000," as former Russian security chief Alexander Lebed put it — before reason prevailed.

It was inevitable that the Chechens would make a run for it when the old Soviet Union broke up. They were the last of the Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus to be conquered by the Russians in the 19th century, after decades of guerrilla resistance. They were deported to Siberia en masse by Stalin during the Second World War for disloyalty, and only half survived to come home. They never ceased to see Russian rule as illegitimate and temporary.

So in 1991, under the leadership of Dzhokhar Dudayev (a former Soviet air force general), the Chechens declared independence — and for two years, they got away with it. Moscow never formally accepted the change, for unlike Estonia, Armenia, Ukraine, and all the other republics that broke away, Chechenya was legally part of Russia. But in practice, the Chechens were running their own show.

It was a fairly satisfactory compromise, and it might have continued indefinitely if Russian President Boris Yeltsin had not needed a boost for his waning popularity. But in December 1993, swayed by his generals' promises of an easy military victory, he sent Russian troops in to seize the Chechen capital, Grozny.

The Russian army has more soldiers than

Chechenya has people, but things did not work out the way Yeltsin planned. It took his troops not a few days but ten weeks to capture Grozny, and they only succeeded by shelling and bombing the city to rubble. Then came a relentless, endless guerrilla war in rural Chechenya, punctuated by spectacular Chechen raids into Russia itself.

Russians watched, appalled, as their frightened, demoralised conscript sons died before their eyes every night on television. The "war party" in Moscow (some of whose leaders were indeed reaping huge profits from the war) kept announcing total victory, but the war just ground on.

Dudayev was killed by a Russian rocket last spring. (It homed in on the uplink from a telephone he was using to confer with a Russian peace mediator via satellite.) Yeltsin signed a peace agreement in May, to win some votes in the June presidential election, but the Russians restarted the war soon afterwards.

And then, on Aug. 6 of last year, the Chechens broke Rule One in the book of guerrilla warfare. They recaptured Grozny. This is not supposed to happen. In guerrilla wars, the regular army holds the cities, and the guerrillas lurk in the woods. But Chechen fighters infiltrated Grozny and simply took the city away from the Russians. Within a day, they had five times as many Russian troops surrounded in various strong points within the city. And they did not pull out again after a few days. Breaking

Rule Two, they fought off all Russian counter-attacks and held Grozny.

Game over. Alexander Lebed flew down and signed a deal which effectively granted the Chechens complete control over their own affairs. In a piece of "constructive ambiguity" designed to pacify Russian ultranationalists, a decision on the final constitutional status of Chechenya was postponed for five years, until 2001, but the Russian troops are gone, and for all intents and purposes Chechenya (soon to be re-named Ichkeria) is independent.

Does this herald the break-up of Russia? No, for though the country contains many minority nationalities, almost none except the Chechens lives as a local majority speaking its own language within a well-defined territory. Chechenya was a one-off.

And does it mean that similar minorities elsewhere now have a better chance of gaining independence, even from large and powerful states like China, India and Indonesia?

Good question. In general, the international circumstances for successful secession are more favourable than they were during the cold war, when every local dispute became a cold war issue. But in practice it depends on who, when and where.

It helps greatly if the country you are trying to leave has a long history of tyranny. The breakout is very unlikely to succeed, however, until the country starts to democratise: the moment of transition is the moment of opportuni-

ty for small states like Chechenya. And if you plan to leave, you had better be on the periphery of the country, not somewhere in the middle.

By these criteria, Tibet gets three out of three and a fairly good chance of winning free when China democratises. Same goes for southern Sudan and the various minorities of Burma. But East Timor

only gets two out of three: it is not at Indonesia's periphery. And Kashmir, the Sri Lankan Tamils, Corsica and the Basques only get one, because the parent states are already democracies.

Chechenya is just Chechenya, not part of some wave of secessions that will dominate the global future. But it is nice to see it win.

LETTERS

Double crimes go unpunished

To the Editor:

A FEW years ago, there was a story in a local Arabic paper on another not so typical "crime of honour".

The victim, of course, was a woman, but she was pregnant. The convicted killer, of course, was a kin, who was released after serving a short-term imprisonment, due to the "circumstances" of the case.

What about the yet unborn foetus? What crime did it commit then?

As if I had uncovered a big riddle, I asked some friends and lawyers if they ever came across such a case? The answer was negative. The fact of the matter was that the killer had killed two souls. One was "guilty", and the other was related to her.

Do our legislations deal with such a double murder? If not, why?

To my personal dismay, no measure was taken then to address the matter. In my personal conviction, no measure will be taken now.

All these things and more came to my mind as I read Rana Hussein's story, "19-year-old killed in a 'crime of honour'" (Jordan Times, Jan. 25, 1997). The victim was reportedly pregnant.

Ms. Hussein should have no worry about her journalistic future. If colleagues of hers cannot find stories to write about some day in the future, it seems our young men, protected by the "benign" wings of our legislation, will keep her busy forever.

Salim Ayoub,
Amman.

By Dr. H. Jurgan

The article is based on an interview with the writer, who is a consultant from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, delivered at a symposium on International German cooperation, held in Aachen last month. The symposium was part of an international conference, "Global Panel 1996, held in Aachen in December, which named Jordan as one of the focus countries for the year.

Cooperation in the field of development means supporting a country's endeavours towards improving the living conditions of its inhabitants. The BMZ provides support for these endeavours by participating in projects which are designed to develop different aspects of a given country. I should point out that these projects are not, however, the BMZ's projects, but principally the projects of the partner countries. Out of the large variety of activities which each country pursues with the aim of improving its own situation, German Economic Cooperation prefers to support those projects which deal with

By Barry May
Renter

DUBAI — Sir Wilfred Thesiger, reconciled to change wrought by the discovery of oil but resentful of it, has made a rare return to the sands of Arabia and reunited with his old bedouin travelling companions of half a century ago.

Salim bin Kabina and Salim bin Ghabasha, once ragged teenage camel riders, are gentle greybeards now.

In "Arabian Sands", Mr. Thesiger's account of two epic journeys by camel across the barren empty quarter of southern Arabia in the 1940s, they are photographed barefoot and beardless atop a rocky rock.

Their link hair falls loosely about their shoulders, over which robes are slung. Curved daggers and khamsas — carved talismans — worn at their waists complete the warrior image.

Breeding and trading in camels and engaging in tribal blood feuds seemed to be their only occupations.

The two young men called the intrepid Oxford educated Englishman, Thesiger, a "bushman", tall, lean and athletic. They became his constant companions.

Cursed — or blessed — with wanderlust, Mr. Thesiger first crossed the vast desert with the two nomads in six weeks in 1945. He left the region in 1950 after another traverse and said later he regarded his time in the desert as "the five happiest years of my life".

"I was determined to meet the challenge of the

Europe-Near East cooperation: 'The policy of the EU member states is to respond as partners to the expectations of the Arab World'

By Dr. H. Jurgan

This article is based on an address the writer, who is an official from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, delivered at a symposium on Jordanian-German cooperation held in Aachen last month. The symposium was part of an international conference, Global Pönel 1996, held in Europe in December, which featured Jordan as one of its focus countries for that year.

poverty alleviation, improving education and the protection of the natural environment.

Significance of German-Near East cooperation

Most of the countries of the Near East — Near East as seen from our geographical position — are Europe's neighbours. For many centuries, a large variety of different political, economic and cultural relations have existed with these countries. There is, therefore, a vital interest in the latter's security, stability and development, as well as in intensifying relations with them.

The significance of this region with respect to global policy, as well as to worldwide economic activities, has to be seen within the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Since the end of the Gulf war (1990/91), the countries of the Near East have begun to reconsider the question of inner and outer security, as well as questions of economic and social modernisation within a peaceful environment.

Comparing the countries of the Near East with each other, one's attention is caught by the extreme imbalances which exist

regarding natural resources, fresh water resources and the capacity to generate revenue.

Additionally, the whole region is burdened with a high political conflict potential, as well as with a generally large burden of debt.

From this catalogue of key problems which hamper the development of this region, I would like to mention just five:

— Stagnating economies — with the exception of Jordan which shows an increase of six per cent per annum in its gross national product (GNP).

— Population increase: in just 30 years, the number of inhabitants will have doubled. Currently, about 40 per cent of the population are under 15 years of age.

— A high rate of unemployment: 20-30 per cent of the workforce are unemployed. Lamentably, this group cannot be absorbed by the European market, as the European market is undergoing massive structural changes itself, which imply a relatively high rate of unemployment — and the tendency is rising!

— The region shows a high rate of refugees compared with all developing regions of the world: 30

per cent of all refugees are concentrated in this region.

— Scarcity of water and deterioration of the natural environment. Large areas of the Near East are located in arid zones. Beyond the year 2000, the hitherto known potential of fresh water will not be sufficient to cover demand.

The policy of the EU and the policy of its member states is to respond as partners to the expectations of the Arab World. They aim to cooperate with the Arab World according to the existing possibilities within the context of their own needs in the fields of security, economy and cultural interests.

German development policy actively takes part in the shaping of a mutual concept of the community of Western states. German development policy supports its partners on the way to finding lasting solutions to the problems of the region, by making use of its conceptual and financial means, thus contributing to a secure peace. Via a close and continuing cooperation with European partners, the necessary support is given to the region's efforts towards economic and social progress.

German cooperation with Jordan

Jordan's main problems — which are generally speaking the same as those of the whole region — are aggravated by the following:

— Jordan has only limited natural resources;

— Jordan has to face an ever increasing shortage of water;

— Jordan is located in a zone characterised by chronic crises. The current news headlines underline this observation.

Of these basic problems, only the limited natural resources should be regarded as unchangeable. The amount, the quantity of available resources cannot be increased. It is only possible to use these resources in a sustainable manner, and it is essential to do so in a fair and sharing way. On the other hand, the basic economic and political problems can be dealt with by applying corresponding social and economic policies.

The basic problems can, and should be, compared with Jordan's development potential:

— Jordan commands a relatively high standard of education;

— the communal infrastructure is relatively well developed;

— the fact that Israel is a next-door neighbour may eventually turn out to be of advantage after the signing of the unavoidable peace treaty with the Arab World. It is true that at the moment there is very little indication that this so very-needed treaty will be signed in the near future.

The basic problems and the development potential of Jordan provide an orientation for the concept of the German economic and development cooperation with Jordan.

Let us take a brief glance at the cooperation which has been executed so far:

The basic agreement for economic cooperation with Jordan was signed almost 20 years ago, on June 14, 1977. Since that day, the Federal Republic of Germany has invested about DM 2 billion in development projects in Jordan, in projects of financial and technical cooperation. One billion of that total represents the share for financial cooperation.

Key points of financial cooperation were:

— Improving the infrastructure in the region of Aqaba: port, railway, energy supply.

— Development of the Jordan Valley: drinking water, irrigation, power supply.

— Support for development banks which give loans to small and medium-sized enterprises in manufacturing, communal infrastructure, agriculture.

— Technical cooperation is active in projects in the fields of education, agriculture, environmental protection, technology and know-how transfer, Veterinary and human medicine.

Over the years, the main topics of cooperation have changed. Today, the current financial and technical cooperation projects support the following development programmes:

— In the water sector, the main problem of the scarcity of water is the focal point of endeavours. The pipelines for drinking water show a loss of more than 50 per cent. Hydrogeological investigations aim to provide data on the amount and quality of the available ground water, as well as on its rate of renewal and directions of flow in the subsurface.

— In the southern Jordan Valley, irrigation systems are being constructed. The sewage system, as well as sewage treatment, enjoys special attention because only treated water will be available for agricultural irrigation in the future.

— There are other measures, too, in the agricultural sector.

— Various institutions receive support; e.g., currently a national information system is being introduced; likewise, there have been improvements in the field of land management and land register, as well as the customs administrations.

— There are also improvements in the educational sector.

— Finally, measures towards environmental and resource protection have been implemented, for example, rationalisation of energy in Jordan's industrial sector.

In total, there are now 33 projects running, with a duration of between two and 10 years. They represent a financial volume of about DM 500 million.

In the future, the following four main topics will be attended to under economic cooperation: water supply and sewage treatment; this topic has top priority; agriculture; here, technical cooperation has reached the absorptive capacity of our Jordanian counterparts — an increase in these activities is, therefore, not planned; environmental protection; this sector has been newly established; modernisation of the public and economic administration.

Famed desert traveller in rare return to Arabian sands

By Barry May
Reuters

DUBAI — Sir Wilfred Thesiger, reconciled to change wrought by the discovery of oil but resentful of it, has made a rare return to the sands of Arabia and reunited with his old bedouin travelling companions of half a century ago.

Salim Bin Kabina and Salim Bin Ghabaisha, once ragged teenage camel rustlers, are gentle greybeards now.

In "Arabian Sands", Mr. Thesiger's account of two epic journeys by camel across the barren empty quarter of southern Arabia in the 1940s, they are photographed barefoot and bearded atop a craggy rock.

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The two young men called the intrepid Oxford-educated Englishman — tall, lean and ascetic — mubarak, the blessed one. They became his constant companions.

Cursed — or blessed — with wanderlust, Mr. Thesiger first crossed the vast desert with the two nomads in six weeks in 1946. He left the region in 1950 after another traverse and said later he regarded his time in the desert as "the five happiest years of my life".

"I was determined to meet the challenge of the

desert and be on equal terms with the bedu," the 86-year-old explorer said during a visit to Dubai.

Mr. Thesiger wrote "Arabian Sands", first

"It's very impressive — I'm not saying I like it. I prefer it the way it was the first time I came here. I've always detested cars and planes. They diminish the world and rob it of all its diversity."

published in 1959, as "a memorial to a vanished past, a tribute to a once magnificent people".

He came to Dubai, a city of large steel-and-glass office blocks, luxury hotels and eight-lane highways that are tribute to the success of a relentless battle to tame the desert, for the opening of an exhibition of some of the many photographs — always in monochrome, never in colour — he took during his travels.

Mr. Thesiger guided Bin Kabina and Bin Ghabaisha, agog at Dubai in all its modernity, around the exhibition and smiled at the pictures of them as young tribesmen.

Did he recognise any-

thing of the old Dubai, the small fishing village and port on the creek, in today's city?

"It's completely different. The last time I was here I barely recognised Dubai creek," he said.

"It's very impressive — I'm not saying I like it. I prefer it the way it was the first time I came here. I've always detested cars and planes. They diminish the world and rob it of all its diversity."

Mr. Thesiger loves the silence of the desert and blames the discovery of oil for the disappearance of the life he knew.

When he first returned to Arabia in 1977 he found Abu Dhabi, capital of the newly formed country of the United Arab Emirates "an Arabian nightmare, the final disillusionment".

Abu Dhabi's high-rise buildings and oil refineries spread over what had been empty desert symbolised all that he hated — modernity in all its aspects.

Back in the city in 1990 for a previous photographic exhibition sponsored by his old friend President Sheikh Zaid Bin Sultan Al-Nabayan, Mr. Thesiger found himself reconciled to the inevitable changes in Arabia which had been brought about by vast oil wealth and were typified by the United Arab Emirates.

"Abu Dhabi is now an impressive modern city, made pleasant in this barren land by avenues of trees and green lawns," he wrote.

Arab inventor claims to solve diesel pollution

By Edna Fernandes
Reuters

Made in China

LONDON — Britain's double-decker bus could be at the cutting edge of an environmental breakthrough.

For the past two years a London bus operator has carried out experiments with an Arab inventor who says he has the solution to the black diesel-based pollution fumes that led Britain's air quality levels to break world safety standards last summer.

Hassan Assali linked up with the London and Liverpool bus company Merseyside Transport Ltd (MTL) in a two-year experiment to test his invention — an oil recycler which he told Reuters cuts pollution levels by 50 per cent and saves on lubricating oil by recycling it six to 10 times.

"Last summer there was big talk about stopping vehicles entering towns altogether as pollution levels were going through the roof."

"With this," said Mr. Assali, cradling his recycler at his west London headquarters, "we can cut the amount of oil used and dumped, cut pollution levels, plus save money."

The recycler, invented by Mr. Assali who is managing director of the company behind it called Pinmore, has taken six years to develop and millions of pounds (dollars) of investment funded by an anonymous Palestinian backer.

The Pinmore recycler prototype was made by a gunsmith in London's East End because: "It was the only way we could get the precision we needed," said Mr. Assali.

industry, also agreed it worked.

Phil Locke, systems manager for group engineering at MTL, told Reuters: "We've had a lot of success and it's given us tremendous savings. It's also given us smaller fuel emissions, which are down sharply."

He said the bus group's initial scepticism had vanished and it is now considering buying up to 2,000 recyclers for its fleet in London and Liverpool.

"We've had so many people approach us in the past with different systems and they say it works. But most don't. We took a gamble on Mr. Assali and it's working," said Locke.

"I think it's been looked at by enough people and they see the benefits — it has the chance of turning into a big thing."

The reception from motor manufacturers like Nissan has been cooler, says Mr. Assali, despite the pressing environmental and

health arguments to cut pollution.

Mr. Assali also says two major oil companies have called him to rubbish his work out of hand. "I was afraid they would send a hit-man," he joked.

But he says the evidence is in his favour. Pinmore carried out experiments for two years in north London with MTL.

Discs are heated to 160 degrees, bringing oil to 120 degrees, hotter than the engine temperature. As oil trickles down the discs the contaminants, such as water, diesel fuel and gases evaporate.

The resulting vapour is fed into a chamber where it is burned off separately.

Very old vehicles like the Red Routemaster buses, some of which are 25 years old, can run for 60,000 kilometres (37,280 miles) without changing the oil — that is six times the normal distance.

First buses, then the world

Pinmore has high hopes for its product and plans to take polluting vehicles by storm. "We will hit the bus companies first and then the black cab market in London — 23,000 cabs in total."

"We will then tackle the major UK cities — Sheffield, Glasgow, Bradford. The market is massive. We could take it to Paris, Frankfurt, Berlin — every diesel city in Europe."

MTL now plans to set up a mobile laboratory where anyone can inspect the recycler and the test results.

"We're working towards helping others fight pollution. We're not trying to keep it to ourselves," said Locke.

"If we put it into the bus market first, then perhaps someone from the government will say: 'If it works for buses then why can't it work for taxis or the private car?'"

Recycling bus

The experiment fitted one bus with a recycler and one without, said Mr. Assali. "We said to the client: 'Run these buses in the worst conditions possible — stopping, starting continuously, and braking suddenly.'"

He claimed the old Red Routemaster bus, the famous London symbol also renowned for belching black fumes, was fitted with the recycler in February 1995 and did not have to change its oil until July that year.

The London arm of MTL then invited Mr. Assali to its headquarters in Liverpool where "I explained the invention to the top brass."

Commenting on the financial benefits, he says that MTL as a company uses 40 tonnes of oil a year — which can easily be cut by a sixth on average by using the recycler.

"We started with three principles in mind — to save oil, maintain engine quality and to help the environment by cutting polluting emissions."

The Pinmore filters the oil using a secondary filter controlled by a microprocessor.

The filter has a pyramid of discs, down which oil cascades.

Save water every drop counts !

JEWELLERY

A shared magnificent obsession

FOR CENTURIES men have derived material satisfaction, aesthetic pleasures, philosophical insight and divine inspiration from ornaments and ornamenting metal like gold and silver, not to mention the immortality of diamonds or the allure of the likes of topaz and amethyst. Historians believe that all over India (in fact all over the world) the concept of ornamentation began with the idea of wearing charms to ward off evil. Animal teeth, bones and claws were perhaps the earliest forms of accessories that man chose. It is believed, for instance, that wearing a single earring frightens off the devils of the sea. That is why pirates wear them that way. Gradually "warding off" began to mean keeping good health and jewellery became an aid to do so. An earring, it is said, also came to be worn because it was believed that a hole pierced in the ear at that point improves eyesight!

Utility was next in the order of things and soon jewellery acquired the value of being utilitarian. Rings originated from the need of kings or tradesmen to carry their seal with them. The ring was a seal holder. The amulets worn on the arm contained charms. In fact so did some necklaces. Fancy and intricately ornamented belts were actually holding the modesty of the wearer. The girdle came to be fashioned in many styles and is common to all societies in India, be it a tribal one in Arunachal Pradesh or a royal one in the golden age of the Mauryas!

Very early, however, the ingenuity of man turned these beliefs into ornaments with great decorative value. In it they embedded a lot of symbolism. One fine example of it is the manglasutra or the thali, an ornament common to women from all over India. It is a symbol of being married and though the design varies from region to region, almost all of them have such an institution.

In Maharashtra it comes strung on a necklace of black beads while in Tamil Nadu it comes with a pendant. In the east it is a bangle that is worn to identify a married woman. All over India women wear ornaments on their head called the Chandran or the moon and the Suryan or the sun. They also wear something very pretty on the parting of their hair. Equally common are the umbrella-shaped earrings. They



can be found in myriad designs from Kashmir to Kanyakumari.

It is amazing the manner in which jewellery is worn has been dictated by the circumstances prevailing in different areas. In Rajasthan, for example, women covered their face so what was visible of them was their hands and feet. Their ornaments for the



hand, spreading like a web over the hand and culminating in rings for the fingers has to be seen to be believed! Similarly their anklets are some of the prettiest, not to mention their unique designs in bangles. In Himachal Pradesh, where most of the body is covered with woollens, the best piece of jewellery that will show well is the nose ring and they have some fascinating ones.

The obsession with ornaments can be traced back to the Mohenjo-Daro civilisation. The National Museum in Delhi has a gallery on jewellery

AS IF a natural sequence to the story of Delhi's antiquity, the glorious site of Indraprastha of the great epic Mahabharata is now confirmed to have been part of this region. Findings of the Stone Age tools earlier in the vicinity of Anangpur area had conclusively indicated that pre-historic man lived in Delhi and its surrounding areas, vaster than what forms the part of southern Delhi. The excavations carried out by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in 1991 revealed many such tools. The information available through literary and archaeological sources, though small, confirms Delhi's antiquity and continuity.

It is significant that until the beginning of present century, a village called Indrapat, obviously derived from Indraprastha, lay within the precincts of Purana Quila (Old Fort). In fact till late forties, the area within the boundaries of this fort presented a village-like appearance and the surviving accommodation was used by the villagers as well as refugees after partition of the country in 1947. The villagers till then called it as Pandavas' Quila. The discovery of an Ashokan epigraph in Lajpat Nagar in south Delhi in 1966 seemed to have furthered the keen interest in the search of antiquity of Delhi and the location of the site of Indraprastha. Since the site near Anangpur has been confirmed as the site of pre-historic man, the reasons for its choice were attributed

to the easy availability of water, raw material for tool-making and thick forest for game.

But more than that, this region has inherent magnetism since time immemorial. It is this pull which seems to have drawn even Pandavas. After the division of their ancestral estate due to strife, Pandavas were offered the densely-forested area of Khandavaprastha; they accepted even that. This area was also known as Yoginipur. Other places called Baghpat, Sonpat (Sonepat), Tilpat and Panipat were the other "Pats" which were demanded by Pandavas from the Kauravas (Mahabharata). Significantly all these places have yielded the painted greyware

associated with the so-called Mahabharata sites which have emerged after the excavations at Hastinapur in 1950.

Before beginning the digging into the past eras, the archaeologists tap the literary sources. To go deeper, in this case, they looked extensively into Buddhist texts and Jatakas to find a definite direction. Epics and Puranas (ancient sacred scriptures) are the other sources taken into account. As mentioned in the Buddhist text, the present Delhi kingdom was known to have had many towns, villages and cities and Indraprastha was the most important of them all. Since these sources, as well as legends refer to events and conditions

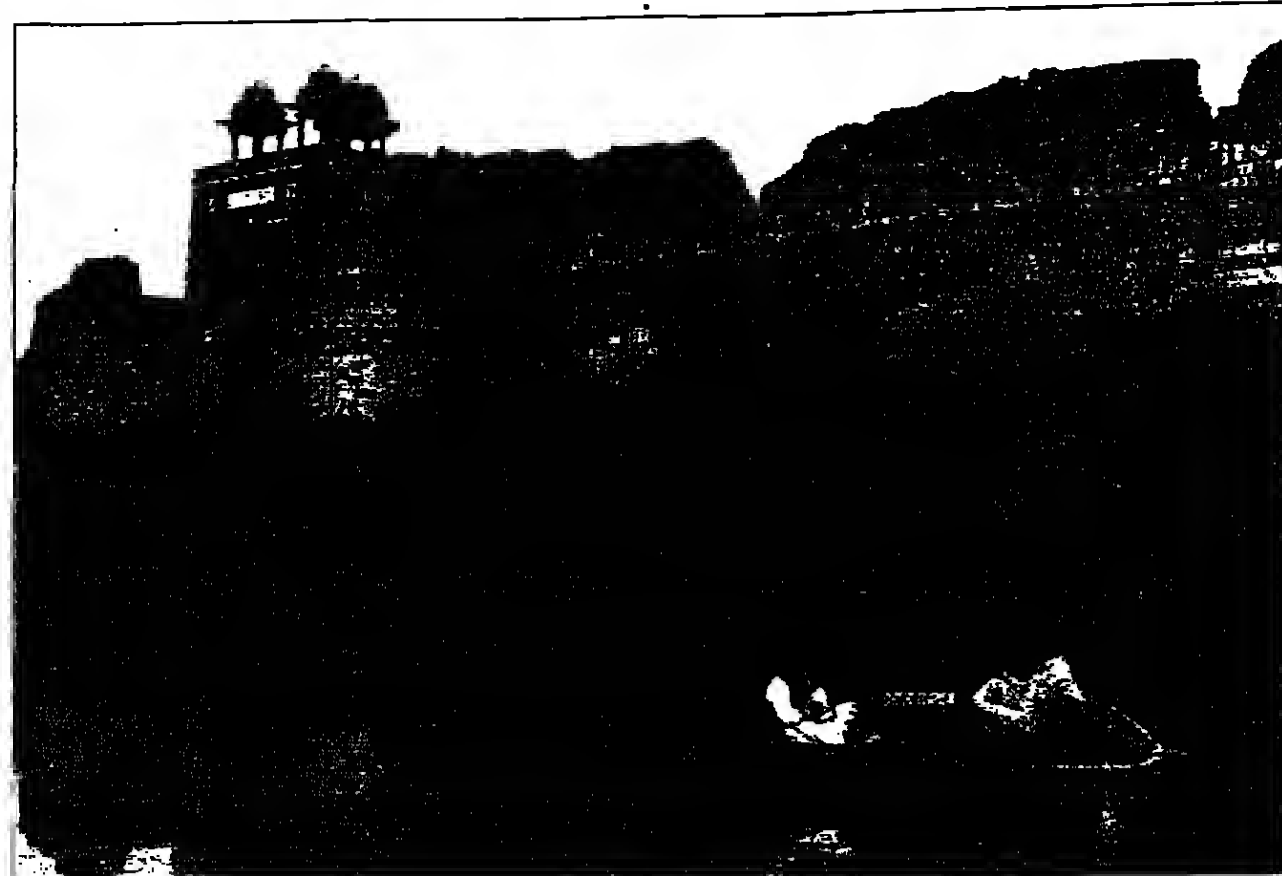
of much earlier times, these have been relied upon to a reasonable extent. Though the exact dating of the literary sources is not possible, their chronological sequence has generally been agreed upon. The Buddhist text has described the Indrapat in much precise details and glowing terms. This town, as described therein was well connected by roads to all the main cities of which Benaras received a special mention.

An eminent archaeologist Cunningham asserted the probable date of occupation of Indraprastha as 1511 B.C. No direct evidence to support the theory of the identity of Indraprastha with

Delhi was found till late, though plenty of circumstantial evidence was there. The assumed location of Indraprastha was between the present Ferozshah Kotla and Humayun's Tomb along the banks of Yamuna (which flows in that area). But it had remained a vague guess till the excavations were carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1955 and the site fixed to be in the lower mound. In Purana Quila. Extensive excavations were carried out in 1966 and the following four years. Painted greyware, an offering stand in red and few other objects found there confirmed the theory and encouraged further probes.

Delhi through the ages

Old name: Indra-Prastha (Abode of the Lord of Lords)

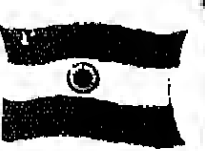


Purana Quila in Delhi

AGRA CITY is virtual gateway to a world of discovery — a freezeframe from a resplendent era that's long since gone by. It has witnessed the rise of the pomp and pageantry of three great Mogul monarchs — Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan — all of whom lavished on this fabled city their love and riches to transform the land into one of the greatest centres of art, culture, learning and commerce. Much of the city's impressive past lives in evidence even today, in the haunting presence of the monuments and in the majesty of the buildings.

In terms of ambience, it is still associated with the Mogul period. The Taj Mahal, essentially one man's monumental testimony to love, has become synonymous with India as a whole. Agra, however, has more than just the Taj to offer. Agra Fort, on the banks of the Yamuna, is situated in the centre of the town. Various styles of architecture are evident within the fort and demonstrate the boldness of Akbar's period, the refinement of Jahangir's times, and the subtlety of Shah Jahan's rule. The other attractions here include

On the occasion of Republic Day, Kavar Drug Conveys his hearty greetings to the government and Indian people.



ON THE OCCASION OF REPUBLIC DAY

Indo-Jordan Chamber of Commerce (A Joint Venture of) CONVEYS ITS FELICITATIONS AND WISHES TO THE

Jordan stands by its people

Continued from page 1) publicly attacked the official Jordanian position, filed by the Jordanian Ambassador in Beirut, Mr. Awni al-Khatib, during a meeting with the Lebanese Ambassador to Jordan, Mr. William al-Khatib, last week. In a protest note, Jordan called the meeting of the two ambassadors a "violation of diplomatic immunity and an act of aggression." In a reply, the Lebanese Ambassador contended that the meeting was an internal Lebanese affair and that Jordan had no right to interfere. Mr. al-Khatib told the Jordanian Ambassador: "We do not believe that we are involved in the internal affairs of Lebanon." He also said that the Jordanian Ambassador had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of Lebanon. He said that the Jordanian Ambassador had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of Lebanon.

Al Karmel
Travel & Tourism
Trading Company

The General Sales Agent in Jordan for



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REPUBLIC DAY.



MODERN VEHICLE TRADING CO.

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Congratulate the president
and the people of India
on the occasion of the
REPUBLIC DAY



JORDAN FERTILIZER ASSOCIATION

ARAB POTASH CO.

JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES CO.



**WISH THE PEOPLE OF INDIA
A HAPPY REPUBLIC DAY
AFFIRMING JORDANIAN FRIENDSHIP
AND HOPES OF CONTINUED
PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY**



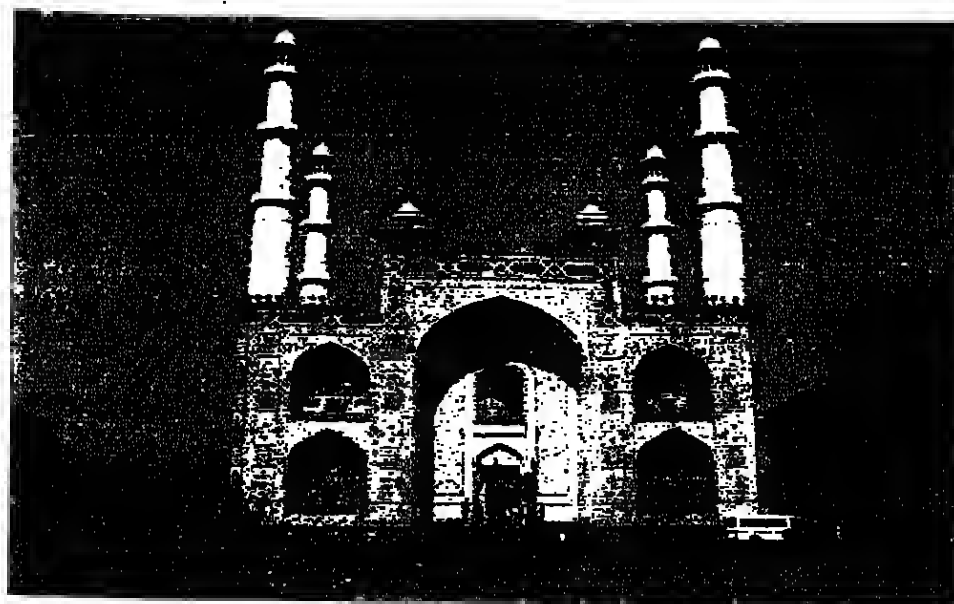
ages
(of Lords)

Agra's monuments — looking beyond the Taj

AGRA CITY is virtual gateway to a world of discovery — a freeze-frame from a repleant era that's long since gone by. It has witnessed the rise of the pomp and pageantry of three great Mogul monarchs — Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jahan — all of whom lavished on this fabled city, their love and riches to transform the land into one of the greatest centres of art, culture, learning and commerce. Much of the city's impressive past lives in evidence even today, in the haunting presence inside the monuments and in the majesty of the building.

In terms of ambience, it is still associated with the Mogul period. The Taj Mahal, essentially one man's monumental testimony to love, has become synonymous not only with this city but with India as a whole.

Agra, however, has more than just the Taj to offer. Agra Fort, on the banks of the Yamuna, is situated in the centre of the town. Various styles of architecture are evident within the fort and demonstrate the boldness of Akbar's period, the refinement of Jehangir's times, and the subtlety of Shah Jahan's rule. The other attractions here include



Sikandra - Tomb of Akbar

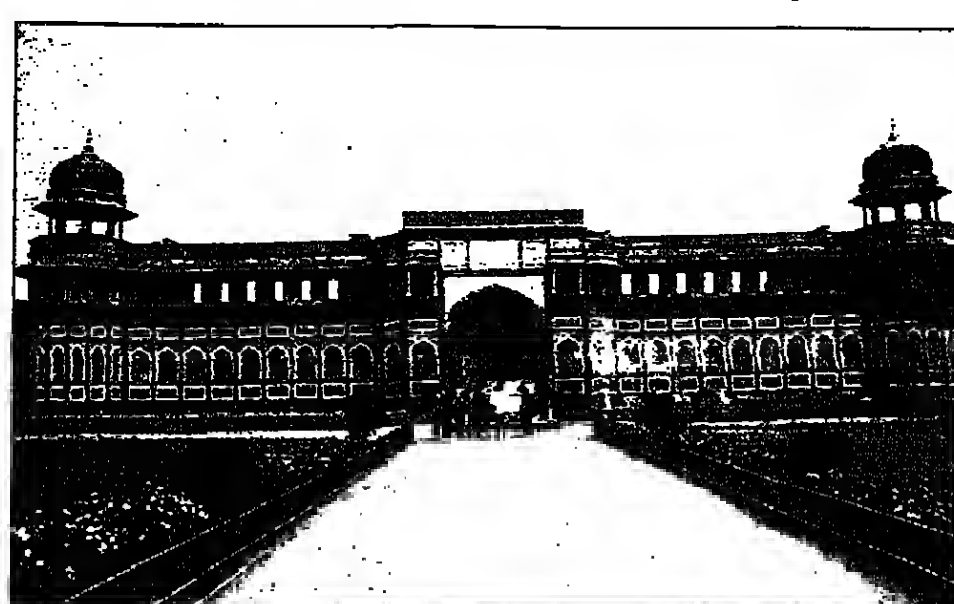
the Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas and Jodhabai's Palace.

About 37 km from Agra was one of the capital cities of Akbar. The capital city, originally designated as Fatehabad, after Akbar's conquest of Gujarat in June 1573, came to be popularly called Fatehpur Sikri. The occasion also marked the building of the southern gateway of Jami Mosque, the Buland Darwaza, which constitutes the glory of Fatehpur Sikri. The palaces were built to the east of the Jami Masjid, while the city was laid out below the palace-

site along the border of the ridge. The various block and quarters of the city were connected with stonepaved streets and adorned with green avenues, gardens, pleasure-pavilions, public hammams (baths), water channels and fountains, the remains of which excite the imagination and admiration of the visitor.

Situated across the Yamuna, about 4 km away, Sikandra houses the tomb of Emperor

Akbar. The construction of Sikandra was started by Akbar but completed by Jehangir. This mausoleum is not like a conventional Muslim tomb. In design it is like a Buddhist vihar or monastery. The tomb is of a pyramidal form and stands on a high terrace in the centre of a vast and well-laid out garden. The most outstanding feature of the main gateway is its four beautiful minarets of white marble which rise



Mausoleum of Itmad-Ud-Daula

gracefully high into the sky, carrying the whole body of the gateway with them. The excellence of Akbar's mausoleum lies in its being a cosmopolitan structure. It is a fine example

of the harmonious blending of the Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and Christian styles of architecture.

Situated opposite the Taj Mahal, on the other side of the Yamuna,

Itmad-ud-Daula houses the magnificent mausoleum of Ghias Beg, the father of Noor Jahan. The tomb has been planned in the centre of a Charbagh (four-quartered garden).

Pseudo-gateways and water pavilions have been constructed in the centre of the north and south sides. The west or riverside has in its middle a multi-roomed pavilion. It rests in a beautiful-planned setting which imparts an aesthetic impression. The main tomb is of pure white marble, which has a tank with a fountain in the centre of each of its sides. Each facade of the tomb is composed of three arches, the centre one providing the entrance, the other two on the sides being closed with beautiful trellis screens. Each side is protected above by a chhajja and a perforated balustrade. The jalees (marble trellis) of the balustrade have been carved so delicately that they appear to be made of ivory. The craftsmanship of this monument surpasses that of the Taj.

On the occasion of the
Republic Day of India
Kawar Drug Store
Conveys his hearty greeting to the government and Indian people.

ON THE OCCASION OF
THE INDEPENDENCE DAY
OF INDIA
A. R. KEVORKIAN CO.
EXTEND THEIR FELICITATIONS
AND BEST WISHES TO THE PEOPLE
OF INDIA ON THIS
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On the occasion of the
Republic Day of India
Indo-Jordan Scholars Club
conveys its hearty greeting to the government and Indian people

On the occasion of the
Republic Day of India
Chemical and Mining Industries Co. Ltd.
Amman - Jordan
present their congratulation to the people of India and to the Indian embassy staff in Jordan

On the occasion of the
Republic Day of India
Dr. Naser Al Maaitah
director of Zarqa University Services Est.
conveys his hearty greeting to the government and Indian people.

PAK VAN SERVICES
Congratulates the Government & the People of India on the occasion of
"The Republic Day of India"
and extends its wishes for a healthy & prosperous future

ON THE OCCASION OF THE
REPUBLIC DAY OF INDIA

Indo-Jordan Chemicals Company Ltd.
(A Joint Venture of SPIC-India & JPMC-Jordan)
CONVEYS ITS FELICITATIONS AND CORDIAL WISHES TO THE PEOPLE OF INDIA

"The management and staff
of the Forte Grand Amman
would like to congratulate
the Indian Embassy on the
occasion of their
Independence Day"

FORTE GRAND
AMMAN

The Commercial & Industrial Co.
Dealers of Maruti vehicles in Jordan

Congratulates
The Republic of INDIA
on their National Day

MARUTI

Jordan stands by its protest against Lebanese release of Iraqi diplomats

(Continued from page 1)

prompted an official Jordanian protest, filed by Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh during a meeting with the Lebanese ambassador to Jordan, William Habib, early last week.

In its protest note, Jordan described the freeing of the diplomats as a "violation of Lebanon's engagement to fight terrorism and its commitment to justice."

Subsequently, the Lebanese government contended that the protest was an interference in internal Lebanese affairs.

Dr. Muasher told the Jordan Times on Saturday: "We do not believe that we are meddling in the internal affairs of Lebanon."

"Southeil held Jordanian nationality," and therefore anything related to his killing is definitely a Jordanian concern," said the minister.

Dr. Muasher noted that the Lebanese government had

publicly announced that the Iraqi diplomats, who were arrested in Beirut as they were trying to leave the country, had confessed to the killing.

"It is strange that the Lebanese government have taken the decision (to free the three) after it confirmed that they had admitted to their deeds," said Dr. Muasher.

"It is equally strange that it took the Lebanese government three years to determine that the three had diplomatic immunity and should be released," he added.

In any event, added the minister, "the Lebanese government's explanation (over the release of the Iraqis) is not convincing either in substance or in form."

The French news agency, Agence France Presse (AFP), meanwhile reported that Lebanon on Saturday "warned" Jordan to keep out of its internal affairs, in reply to Amman's complaint over the freeing of three Iraqi diplomats.

It said the Jordanian ambassador to Lebanon, Fakhri Abu Taleb, was summoned to the Lebanese Foreign Ministry to receive a formal reply to the Jordanian protest lodged with Ambassador Habib in Amman.

"The issue (of the diplomats) falls within the domain of sovereignty and Lebanon, which is keen not to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries, hopes they will adopt the same attitude in return," AFP quoted the Lebanese statement as saying.

Reuters said the statement was handed over by Ambassador Abu Taleb by Lebanese Foreign Ministry Director-General Zafer Al Hassan.

Mr. Hassan told the ambassador that "Lebanon insists on its commitment to international agreements and on its obligation towards diplomats on its soil," said a source quoted by Reuters.

One week after the killing, Beirut broke off diplomatic

relations with Baghdad after the Iraqi authorities failed to lift the suspects' diplomatic immunity.

Shortly after the murder, Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez said the diplomats had confessed their involvement and that they were intelligence agents.

But late Friday Mr. Bouez, citing what he said were Lebanon's diplomatic obligations, dismissed complaints against the release of the three as "unacceptable."

Mr. Bouez said on Wednesday that under international law Lebanon could not try the three Iraqis since they had diplomatic immunity, but it could expel them.

The family of Southeil had also filed a formal appeal against the release of the Iraqis.

Iraq itself has denied any involvement in the murder and has accused Lebanon of violating the 1961 Vienna Convention regarding diplomatic relations.

Albright: Mideast peace is highest priority

(Continued from page 1)

Golan. The new right-wing government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offered last week to resume negotiations with no preconditions but would not pledge to discuss a withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Mr. Netanyahu has said previously that the Golan would never be returned and was of strategic importance to Israel.

In her comments on Saturday, Ms. Albright, suggesting that the U.S. government no longer has the ear of the public on international issues, said, "I think the people don't understand what the stakes are."

Appearing on CNN's "Larry King Live" Friday, a day after taking office, Ms. Albright said there were not many ambiguities during the cold war, when "there were the communists and there were us and we were the good guys and they were the bad guys."

The time has come, she said, for the government to "reconnect the American people to our

foreign policy. ... We have to figure out what the threats are against our way of life and how to protect ourselves."

Ms. Albright hinted that she planned to travel less abroad than did her record-setting predecessor, Warren Christopher, who racked up 1,128,992 kilometres in four years.

Instead, she said she plans to travel more around the United States so the American people can feel they are a part of the foreign policy process.

While the threats are very different now, "the American people can understand them if you tell them about it," she said. "We need to work together."

Egypt, S. Arabia oppose division

(Continued from page 1)

fighting was "the result of internal developments." He called on the Sudanese people "to adopt a unified position in order to save the country from the dangers engulfing it because of errors in the policies currently followed by Sudan."

Sudanese government troops are preparing a massive counter-offensive against opposition rebels which have seized a swathe of territory in eastern Sudan. Both Egypt and Saudi Arabia have ignored pleas for aid from the Islamist regime in Khartoum, which has accused Ethiopia and Eritrea of supporting attacks by the opposition

forces, allegations denied by both countries. Sudanese Vice President Al Zubair Mohammed Saleh has visited both Egypt and Saudi Arabia recently in a bid to win support for his government. Mr. Musa said his 48-hour visit here would involve discussions with Saudi leaders on the situation in the Arab World in general and not only Sudan. Both foreign ministers spoke of the need to implement fully the Israeli-Palestinian accord on the West Bank town of Hebron and expressed hope for developments on other tracks of the peace process, particularly talks between Syria and Israel.

Khartoum says 17 Ethiopian soldiers killed on rebel front

(Continued from page 1)

uprising. Rebel leader John Garang has said his troops were just 20 kilometres away from the dam. But their advance seems to have lost momentum and journalists visiting the site on Friday and Saturday could not see any rebel troops.

Sudan reported on Friday that rebels on the northeastern front had attacked government troops for the first time in more than a week and had inflicted heavy losses. An official Sudanese daily did not say when the clash took place. Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir visited Damazin

on Friday. Many Khartoum-based analysts took this as a signal of the beginning of the counter-offensive. The government has denied reports of most rebel advances but has conceded that they have taken over Qeisan and Kurmuk, two small towns on the Ethiopian border.

U.S. farm exports to Arab Gulf states peak in '96

ABU DHABI (AFP) — U.S. farm exports to Arab Gulf oil producers hit a record in the first nine months of 1996 and they are projected to grow further in the next years, official figures have showed.

Exports of food and other farm products to the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) peaked at around \$555 million in the first three quarters, an increase of eight per cent over the same period of 1995, according to the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), which cited official U.S. figures.

"Over the next few years, U.S. agricultural exports to the GCC are expected to grow by some 10 to 15 per cent annually after they reached their highest level in the first nine months of last year," it said in a statement.

"This is due to changing consumer preferences,

expansion of the fast food sector and a growing local awareness of the high quality of U.S. food products," the DWTC said.

U.S. farm exports to the Gulf include poultry, meat, processed fruits and vegetables, cheese and other dairy products, and a variety of snack foods.

The United States is the third biggest commercial partner of the GCC, which groups Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in a political, defence and economic alliance. Its exports to the six nations totalled \$10.2 billion in 1995.

The United States will be one of the main exhibitors at an international food show to be held in Dubai on Feb. 23. The statement said it expected U.S. companies to win food supply deals worth millions of dollars.

Bseiso describes Palestinian economy in '96 as disastrous

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The economy in the autonomous Palestinian areas was a disaster in 1996 as per capita income plunged and unemployment and inflation surged to their highest level, a senior official was quoted as saying Saturday.

The governor of the Palestinian Monetary Fund, Fouad Bseiso, blamed what he called Israel's economic siege of the territories since February and failure by

international creditors to fully honour their financial commitments to the Palestinians.

"Last year was an economic disaster in Palestine. There could be a total explosion in which Israel will be the loser," he told the semi-official United Arab Emirates daily Al Itihad.

Dr. Bseiso said the Israeli siege had cost the Palestinian economy around \$1.2 billion while the per capita

income dived to a record low of \$600 million compared with Israel's income of \$16,900.

The national income also plummeted by around 25 per cent from the 1995's income of \$3.58 billion and private investment to nearly \$250 million from \$700 million in 1994, he said.

"This means the majority of the Palestinian people have reached the poverty line, which is estimated at

\$625," he said.

Dr. Bseiso's figures also showed unemployment peaked at 50 per cent, including 60 per cent in Gaza Strip and 28 per cent in the West Bank.

He attributed this to the Israeli economic blockade and a decline in the number of Palestinian workers in Israel to around 20,000 from 120,000 in 1993.

Despite the economic decline, inflation deteriorated in those areas, reaching

eight per cent. Remittances from Palestinians abroad also plunged to around \$300 million in 1996 from more than \$898 million in 1992.

"All these developments have adversely affected the living standards in Palestine... They are counter to all expectations in 1993 that the Palestinian economy will be in a good shape," Dr. Bseiso said.

High oil prices, output boost Omani economy

ABU DHABI (AFP) — An increase in oil prices and production pushed Oman's economy above projected growth rates and slashed the budget deficit to negligible levels in 1996, officials have said.

The surplus in the trade balance has also widened to more than \$600 million, leading to a sharp drop in the balance of payment deficit.

"You can say the economy of Oman in 1996 was in one of its best shapes as most

sectors recorded high growth rates and the budget deficit appears to be negligible," said Mahmoud Jarwani, chief executive of the Muscat Stock Exchange.

"The actual deficit was slashed in the first half of 1996 to less than a fifth of its level in the first half of 1995," he told AFP by telephone.

Figures provided by the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) showed the shortfall in

Oman's budget plunged to nearly 24.5 million Omani riyals (\$63.7 million) in the first seven months of 1996 from around 110 million riyals (286 million) in the same period of 1995.

The deficit was projected at 250 million riyals (\$650 million) as spending was estimated at 2.15 billion riyals (\$5.59 billion) and revenues at 1.9 billion riyals (\$4.94 billion).

"Concerning the economy, growth figures have been

revised to 5.7 per cent from 5.5 per cent because of higher oil prices and output," the AMF said.

It put growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) at 7.6 per cent in the first half of 1996 and inflation at only 1.5 per cent.

Like in other Gulf states, oil provides the bulk of Oman's income and any change in its prices has a direct impact on economic performance.

Oil prices surged by more

than \$3 in 1996 to an average \$20 compared with \$16.8 in 1995. Oman's crude production also increased to around 900,000 barrels per day (bpd) from 860,000 bpd.

Omani officials said the increase boosted the energy sector by nearly 15 per cent in 1996 while most other sectors also recorded high growth rates. They cited farming, manufacturing, construction and trade sectors.

Bank of Israel faces dilemma on exchange rate

TEL AVIV (R) — With the Israeli currency edging higher, the Bank of Israel faces a balancing act between its tough inflationary stance and currency stability, analysts and traders have said.

In the last week, the shekel has risen to the limit of its trading band against an official basket of foreign currencies, forcing the central bank to intervene in the local foreign currency market.

The shekel is allowed to fluctuate in a trading band of seven per cent above or below a sloping mid-point designed to devalue the Israeli currency at a rate of six per cent a year against the basket of key currencies.

As of Tuesday, it was 6.99 per cent under the slope.

Finn Kventy, head of foreign currency trading at United Mizrahi Bank, estimates the central bank spent up to \$500 million in the last week supporting the basket. But in the process, analysts said, the bank threatens to

undermine its tight monetary policy by increasing liquidity in the economy.

The exchange rate problems have prompted speculation that the Bank of Israel wants to widen the band to 10 per cent or more. Some bank officials support such a measure, but treasury officials said they were strongly opposed. Any change in the band would have to be approved by the two sides.

"There is no chance that the Bank of Israel will widen the band," said a Bank Hapoalim currency trader.

Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel has said he sees the foreign exchange regime as a bulwark against the speculation that plagued the Israeli currency in the past.

The exchange rate has been under pressure for two years as Israeli companies increasingly turned to foreign currency loans.

The Bank of Israel's tight monetary policy pushed interest rates to a peak of 17

per cent in the middle of last year. The rate has since fallen, but foreign exchange loans are still cheap.

"Interest rates on the shekel are high, so companies prefer foreign currency loans...and convert the currency to shekels," Mr. Kventy said. "They take a gamble that there won't be a devaluation or at least it will be less than the interest rate differential."

As a result, the dollar rate rose just 3.7 per cent last year, while Israeli inflation was 10.6 per cent.

In recent days the problem has been exacerbated by the strengthening of the U.S. currency in world markets.

The other basket currencies have weakened, forcing the basket rate lower. In addition, the government and state enterprises recently completed several overseas borrowings, repatriating the proceeds.

Since its latest peak in mid-December, the basket rate has fallen 1.3 per cent to 3.6218 on Wednesday.

Prachia Bar-Shavit, chief economist at Bank Hapoalim, said the central bank was making the problem worse by rejecting any possibility of an administrative devaluation and by letting rumours circulate of a wider trading band.

"Speculation that they will widen the band causes the business sector to borrow even more foreign currency," he said. That would be tantamount to an appreciation of the shekel.

Mr. Bar-Shavit said an administrative devaluation with a declaration that others may follow would bring an end to foreign exchange borrowing. "It would create a better balance between greed and fear," he said.

Mr. Bar-Shavit conceded that such a move was unlikely for now, and Mr. Kventy said he doubted it would help.

"People (borrowing in foreign exchange) are looking at the long-term — two to three years. Even a devaluation of 10 per cent could be absorbed," Mr. Kventy said.

Analysts said they doubted the Bank of Israel would ease up on its monetary stance, a view backed by recent remarks from central bank officials.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6286	0.6135	1.4080	118.55	1.3488	1588.04	1.8292	5.4880
DE Mark	0.6140	1.0000	0.3785	0.8332	72.78	0.8279	974.00	1.2332	3.3684
GB Sterling	1.6300	2.6535	1.0000	2.2900	194.10	2.1985	2588.51	2.9316	8.9422
CHF Franc	0.7112	1.1579	0.2438	1.0000	84.30	0.9589	1128.07	1.3611	3.9005
JP Yen	0.0084	1.3732	0.5171	1.1855	1.0000	1.1373	13.39	154.23	4.8258
CA Dollar	0.7414	1.2257	0.2526	1.0875	1.14	1.0000	1194.00	1.3788	4.1345
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0249	0.3880	0.8885	1341.56	0.8488	1.0000	11.51	3.4524
NL Guilder	0.5467	0.8500	0.3362	0.7635	64.76	0.7371	867.83	1.0000	2.9366
FR Franc	0.1823	0.2968	0.1118	0.2519	21.59	0.2458	33.33	33.3300	1.0000

Energy				Mid-East Currencies			
Oil	Last	Previous		Currency	USD	DEM	GBP
Brent	23.35	23.75		SA Riyal	0.2866	0.4344	0.16358
WTI	23.80	23.80		AE Dirham	0.2723	0.4436	0.16705
Bony	23.35	23.75		KW Dinar	3.3113	5.39374	2.03128
Dubai	20.42	20.58		BH Dinar	0.3770	0.52152	0.19734
UL Gas	207.00	209.00		CY Pound	2.037	3.3175	1.2493

Energy				JOD Cross Rates			
Commodity	Last	Delivery		Currency	Buy	Sell	
Coffee (c/b)	144.33	Spot		US Dollar	0.708	0.710	
Sugar (c/b)	238.8	Spot		GB Sterling	1.1536	1.1596	
Rice (c/b)	470	Spot		DE Mark	0.4353	0.4375	
				IT Lira	0.4462	0.4484	

Main Equity Indices							
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pt Ch
New York	DOW JONES	6696.48	-59.27	-0.88	6759.98	6682.23	6755.75
London	S&P 500	770.52	-7.04	-0.91	778.21	768.17	777.56
Tokyo	FT-SE 100	4218.8	-1.23	-0.29	4251.3	4215.7	4271.5
Paris	NIKKEI 225	17689.36	-220.1	-1.23	17893.9	17541.2	17809.5
Frankfurt	CAC 40	2430.34	-30.91	-1.26	2442.49	2422.8	2461.25
	DAX	2998.24	-35.22	-1.19	3008.78	2990.87	3035.45

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

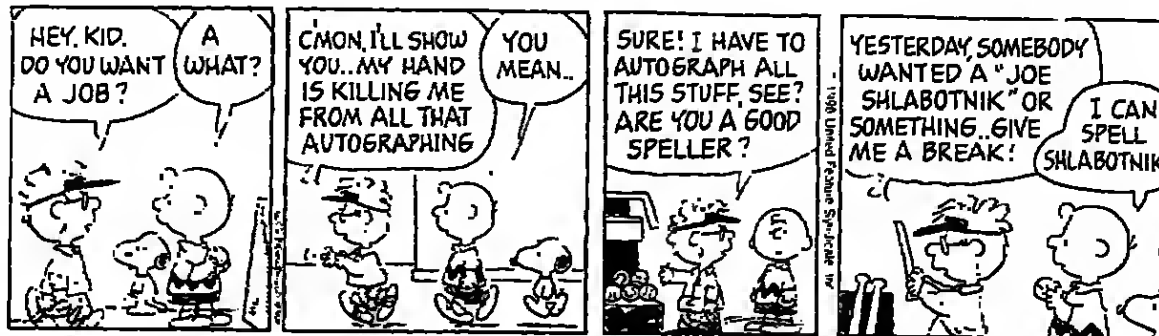
- Ring leader?
- School dance
- Mits
- French composer, Daniel
- Shakespearean villain
- Eight, in Tampico
- The nifty-gritty
- Time abbr.
- Rackel
- Discourage
- Landscape blot
- Title
- The nifty-gritty
- Delectable auto
- Corduroy nb
- Investment acct. abbr.
- Riyadh denizen
- Decrepid auto
- Flabbergast
- Twitch
- Disparage
- Check endorser
- The nifty-gritty
- Prolound
- Chelonians
- Barber's service
- Stradivari's teacher
- Completely
- The nifty-gritty
- Prune
- Rivulet
- Chilly
- Sharp insult
- Ivy League school
- Requirements

by Gayle Dean

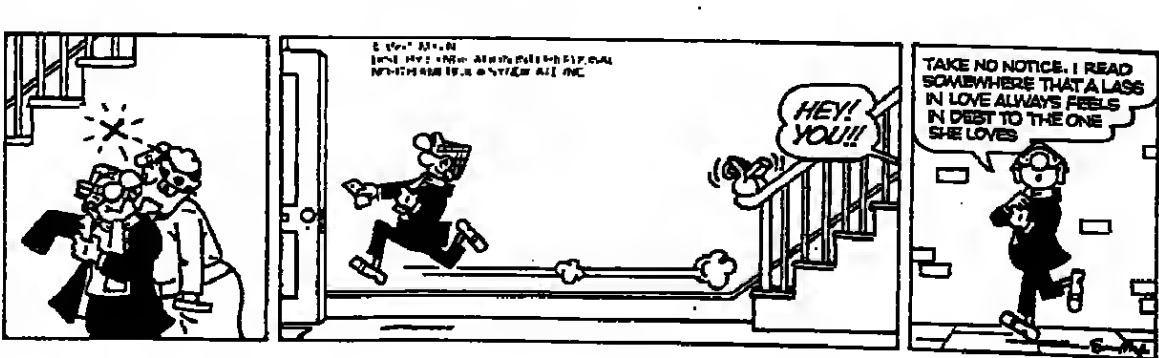
DOWN

- Hiding place
- Sleep on it!
- Mallreast
- Zapata's land, abbr.
- Part of speech
- Sympathizes with
- Bravos from the bleachers
- Curved arch
- Family member
- Couch
- Reality
- Timely question
- Classy
- Knox
- Clay brick
- Highbrow
- Unemployed
- Prize
- A Cole
- Factual
- Lucid
- Wood slat
- PA port
- Tree with edible seeds
- Thunder measure
- Season
- Dutch painter
- Religious person
- Make over
- Steadfast
- On the (unfriendly)
- Norwegian
- Spanish hero
- Idiot vehicles
- Fast fivers
- Fling
- Minor
- Ponder
- Saharan
- Rhithellor tara

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, JANUARY 26, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A change in attitude today can be helpful when dealing with others. Be more thoughtful of older friends and thereby avoid any difficulty. Make sure your care is running smoothly if you go out tonight with your mate.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) If you seek out new sources today, you can get some fine financial advice. Ride yourself of old-fashioned ideas and practices which don't apply anymore. Be understanding to the desires of your mate and show much appreciation.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Your good friends, as always, can be quite supportive and pull you out of that "blue funk" you've been in, so seek out their advice. Avoid a fellow associate who tries to put down your ideas and make you feel small.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Let people see the logical side of your mind today, and you can be quite impressive through your actions. More affection and thoughtfulness towards your mate is important to him or her later this evening.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Give up on a past close friend who always depresses you, and today welcome a new one who can help you as much as you help him or her. Attend to your financial affairs later this evening so that there will be funds available.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Settle a difference between yourself and a family tie who can introduce you to some important people who can be beneficial to your career activities. You may have some added expenses later this evening, so tend to your credit.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Stay away today from boring people and routines. Be alert for new opportunities and ideas which can be beneficial to your success. Plan a trip which will broaden your horizons and get you out of a jam.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Make sure you keep any promises you've made today even though this may temporarily weaken your bank account. Be sure that your advisor is giving you good advice, so that there won't be any mistake made.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Settle the source of a long-standing concern today, and you can better deal with present situations. Listen to the advice of a fellow associate who you know has good judgement in any business related activities.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Don't relay today so much on outsiders when your intuition is working so well. Stop being such a hypochondriac, and use your mind to convince your body that it is well and you are in tip-top condition physically.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A little more enthusiasm in your regular duties today can bring you better results if you keep an eye out. Don't go off on any tangents which aren't beneficial. Visit some acquaintances and old friends later this evening.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Give all attention to the home scene today, and get everything you've been neglecting in order. If you entertain later this evening, you can make an excellent impression on guests by making them feel more comfortable.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz.

Arab Bank investment

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Arab Bank and its regional private investors have created a joint venture with a capital of \$500 million to invest in Egypt and other Arab states, officials said Saturday.

The Arab Bank, one of the largest financial institutions in the Middle East, controls 40 per cent of the Arab Investment Company (AIC) in Egypt while five per

Dubbas: Prices products will

ENERGY AND MINERAL. Dubbas has real intention at all to raise price to compensate the difference due to pay to Baghdad and a barrel from \$15 to \$20. The Dubbas, the addition of the increase in price compensated by better and collecting government dues in general expenditure civil (Al Arabi)

Jordan National absorbs Bus

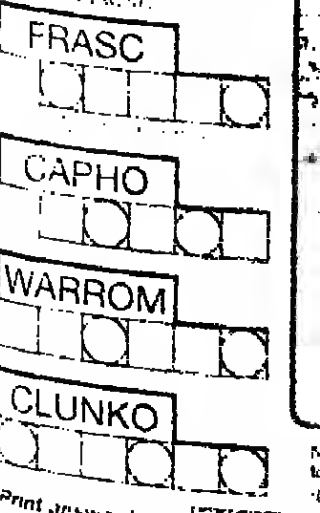
A JOINT meeting of the Jordan National Bank approved an extraordinary Annual General Meeting in the first such a two financially sound units with a name "The JNB" will have a new 1042 unit redistributed among the shareholders of the bank. The joint general assembly of the shareholders of the Jordan National Bank, the assets of the new unit while the liabilities increase. The shareholders equity of the joint general assembly of the shareholders of the Jordan National Bank.

The following were elected board of directors for four years: Nadim Mugharbi, Abdul R. Azzam, the Kuwait Investment Company, Rajat Investment Company, Maj. Saliba and the Social Security

THE BETTER HALF



JUMBLE



Print answer here: XXXX

Arab Bank announces \$60m investment venture in Egypt

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The Arab Bank and other regional private investors have created a joint venture with a capital of \$60 million to invest in Egypt and more firms could be established, owners said Saturday.

The Arab Bank, one of the biggest financial institutions in the Middle East, controls 10 per cent of the Arab Investment Company (ABIC) in Egypt, while five per cent is owned by the Egyptian financial group Hermis and the rest by individual investors, Arab Bank manager in Abu Dhabi, Naim Khoshah, said.

He said more than 80 per cent of the capital of 200 million Egyptian pounds had been secured while the rest would come from Gulf investors.

"The creation of this company came after indications showed that

the Egyptian economy will continue to record high growth rates and large investment opportunities will emerge," he said.

He said the Arab Bank, owned by a group of Palestinian businessmen, was planning to set up similar ventures in Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and the autonomous Palestinian areas. He gave no other details.

UAE pursues plans for Mideast's first free storage zone

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is pursuing plans to set up the Middle East's first free storage zone which officials expect to attract billions of dollars in investment and help support the economy.

Subscribers from the UAE and other countries will be invited this year to contribute to the proposed capital of \$3 billion that will turn an island off Abu Dhabi into a key international warehousing centre.

"Subscription is expected to start in July or August. It will be open to the public inside the UAE and outside

it," a UAE official said.

"Banks and companies in the UAE will be asked to subscribe and to promote the zone abroad. Some of them will also act as channels for subscription."

The UAE, a key Gulf OPEC oil producer, approved plans last year to establish the zone that will include warehousing for oil, food, precious metals and other commodities to be stored on Saadiyat island, where installations by some local companies have been removed to pave the way for the zone.

Commodities stored on the island will be exported to the local and external markets at cheaper prices and officials said they expected this to attract large investment to the UAE and other Gulf states.

Announcing the project last year, the zone's chairman, Hazza Ben Zayed Al

Nahayan said it would support the domestic economy and benefit banks and insurance companies as well as the housing sector in the emirates.

The zone, the first of its kind in the Middle East, will have a capacity to store 67 basic commodities including oil, grain, gold, diamonds, and other precious metals, copper and foodstuffs. It will also have trading floors.

According to the economic weekly Emirates Today, legal procedures for the creation of the company to run the zone have been nearly completed.

"Officials expect a rush in local and international subscription given the importance and the feasibility of the project. After subscription is closed, world companies will immediately be invited to bid for the project," it said.

The UAE already has the biggest free zone in the Gulf but the zone in Dubai includes mainly industrial and marketing units from Asia and other countries with investment of around \$3 billion.

Officials said the Saadiyat zone was part of a drive by the UAE to attract capital in reforms aimed at cushioning the impact of volatile oil export earnings, which account for more than two thirds of its total income.

They said the project was highly feasible as it is located in the heart of a vast market of more than one billion consumers and demand for those commodities has remained strong in the region.

The project will also encourage arms suppliers to invest in the UAE under its offshoot programme which requires weapons exporters to reinvest in civilian projects that should produce up to 60 per cent of the arms deal's value.

The UAE has already attracted nearly 950 million dirhams (\$258.8 million) in offshoot projects and the investments are set to surge in the next years as it intends to spend up to \$7 billion on arms purchases.

"The offshoot programme is greatly interested in this zone, which aims to attract foreign capital," offshoot chief Amin Badraddin said.

"The zone will create several opportunities for the offshoot programme, which could also contribute to promoting it around the world."

Saadiyat is located some six kilometres east of Abu Dhabi and has an area of 35 square kilometres.

Officials said they were considering building a causeway to link the zone to Abu Dhabi city.

Daily Beat

Dabbas: Prices of petroleum products will not be raised

** ENERGY AND Mineral Resources Minister Hashem Dabbas has reaffirmed that there is no intention at all to raise prices of petroleum products to compensate the difference in the oil bill that Jordan has to pay to Baghdad after raising the price of an oil barrel from \$13 to \$19 within the oil cooperation agreement signed with Iraq recently. According to Dr. Dabbas, the additional cost of \$75 million due to the increase in price will be covered and compensated by better and more efficient system in collecting government dues and by further reduction in general expenditure envisaged in the 1997 budget (Al Aswaa).

Jordan National Bank absorbs Business Bank

** A JOINT meeting of the general assemblies of the Jordan National Bank and the Business Bank approved at an extraordinary session held at the Amman Chamber of Industry the merger of the two entities in the first such deal in Jordan between two financially-sound institutions. The new entity will retain the name, The Jordan National Bank and will have a new JD42 million capital which was redistributed among the shareholders in a way that the former shareholders of the Business Bank got JD6 million in the equity of the new entity with the remaining JD36 million taken by the shareholders of the Jordan National Bank before the merger.

The assets of the new entity rose to JD630 million while the liabilities increased to JD562.2 million. The shareholders equity stood at JD67.8 million. The joint general assembly meeting authorised the distribution of dividends at a rate of 18 per cent to the shareholders of the Jordan National Bank before the merger.

The following were elected unopposed to the new board of directors for four years: Rajai Muasher, Nadim Muasher, Abdul Rahman Touqan, Wasef Aze, the Kuwaiti Investment Company, the Arab Insurance Company, Rajai Muasher and Bros Company, Mohammad Tash, Rajai Sukkar, the Muasher Investment Company, Mahmoud Malhas, Michel Saliba and the Social Security Corporation.

Israel, Jordan and PNA jointly advertise in U.S. for tourists

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Tourist ministers from Israel, Jordan and the newly-established Palestinian National Authority (PNA) placed a joint advertisement in U.S. newspapers Friday urging Americans to visit their region.

The slogan of the ad was "Peace: It's a beautiful sight to see."

"Peace" was written in English, Arabic and Hebrew.

The practically full page spread was published in the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune and the Los Angeles Times just one week after an agreement was reached between Israelis and Palestinians on the future of Hebron.

"Children are playing in the parks of Jerusalem. There's a new spirit in the streets of Bethlehem. You can see 'welcome to Jordan' wreathed in the smiles of every shopkeeper in Amman," the advertisement reads.

"Today Israelis, Jordanians and Palestinians open their arms, and their hearts, to extend a warm invitation to the American people to come visit our lands which have given birth to so much faith and so much history," added the text.

The tourism ministers of the region also promised Americans who go to the region a "beautiful and extraordinary experience."

Egypt to let private firms run payphones

CAIRO (R) — The Egyptian state telephone company has said it planned to let the private sector into the telephone business through licences to install and operate public payphones.

The announcement, in the form of an invitation for pre-qualification to tender, showed the first chink in the armour of the state's complete monopoly of telecommunications.

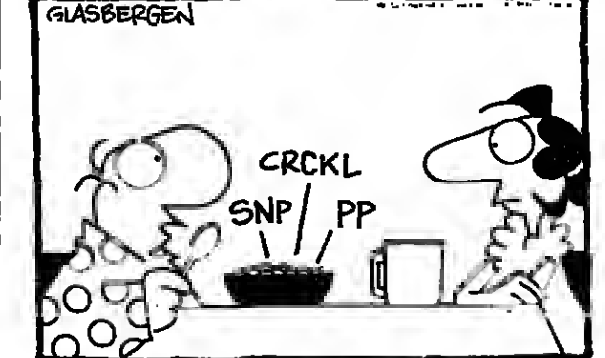
The state company, Arete (National Telecommunications Organization), said it intended to award two licences to private companies for the payphones project.

The authoritative magazine MEED said this month that Global One, a joint venture between France Telecom, Deutsche Telekom and Sprint of the United States, was teaming up with state-owned National Bank of Egypt to provide phone services, starting with payphones and phone cards.

Egypt lags years behind most of the world in public payphones. Most of them use coins and have a limited range.

Private Telecommunications Company had hoped that Egypt would open up to the private sector through its GSM mobile telephone network, which started operating in November. But the network remains firmly in state hands.

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"I bought the kind without vowels because it's cheaper."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles. One letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FRASC

CAPHO

WARRON

CLUNKO

Print answer here: _____

Yesterday's Jumble: FUZZY AFOOT BALLET LARVIX
Answer: Gazing into a crystal ball made her this — A FORTUNE

JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE *** JORDAN MARKETPLACE

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Martina Hingis (R) of Switzerland laughs with France's Mary Pierce during the Australian Open trophy presentation after their final match. Sixteen-year-old Hingis beat Pierce 6-2 6-2 to become the youngest player to win a professional grand slam title (Reuters photo)

Australian Open Hingis rewrites history

MELBOURNE (R) — Sixteen-year-old Martina Hingis became the youngest Grand Slam champion in tennis history on Saturday, humbling France's Mary Pierce with a breathtaking all-round performance in the final of the Australian Open.

The Swiss prodigy took only 59 minutes to seal a 6-2 6-2 victory, launching women's tennis into a new era and leaving former champion Pierce shaking her head in awe.

However hard she tried, the Frenchwoman had no answer to Hingis's deep serves. She was run off her feet by the teenager's inch-perfect returns.

Yet Hingis, who first picked up a tennis racket at the age of two, seemed unimpressed by her place in Grand Slam history.

"It's just another record for me. I've made so many records already," she told reporters.

The victory will take Hingis into second place in the world rankings behind Steffi Graf and the new champion predicted she would soon dethrone Germany's queen of tennis.

"Why not? Only an injury

could hold me away from that right now," she said.

Hingis raised her arms in triumph, saluting the standing ovation from the Melbourne Park crowd before running across the court to embrace her mother and coach, Melanie.

The former Czechoslovak champion, weeping tears of joy, had clambered down from the stands to share in her daughter's remarkable triumph.

At 16 years and three months, Hingis becomes the youngest singles champion at a major championship since long-skirted 15-year-old amateur Lottie Dod won Wimbledon in 1887 — before Grand Slams were invented.

Hingis had already claimed the honour of youngest Grand Slam champion in any discipline by winning the women's doubles at Wimbledon last year. She became Melbourne's youngest champion by winning the women's doubles title here on Friday.

The Czechoslovak-born world number four started the match as her favourite after cruising through the women's draw in



Mary Pierce of France shows her frustration during her final match against Martina Hingis of Switzerland at the Australian Open (Reuters photo)

Melbourne. The only question had been whether she might be hit by nerves in her first Grand Slam singles final.

The only sign of any nerves came after she accepted the winner's trophy and a cheque for \$423,000.

Her voice quavering, Hingis joked: "Next time I'll have to play mixed doubles, so maybe I can win that too."

Graf's shock fourth-round exit coupled with the absence of Monica Seles provided Hingis with an opening, although on Saturday's performance she could have beaten anyone.

Hingis did not drop a set in the tournament but saved her best for last, rocking Pierce's confidence by running down every shot and punishing anything short.

"It's astonishing that someone so young can play so well, with such strength," said Pierce.

The writing was on the wall from game one.

Hingis started tentatively and saved three break points in the opening service game. That was the last chance Pierce had.



Martina Hingis hugs her mother Melanie after winning the Australian Open (Reuters photo)

Woodies win record 8th doubles title

MELBOURNE (AP) — Australians Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde won a record eighth Grand Slam men's doubles title Saturday, beating Sebastian Lareau and Alex O'Brien 4-6, 7-5, 7-5, 6-3 in the final of the Australian Open.

Although Woodforde lost his serve four times, the "Woodies" broke Lareau six times in the three-hour match. They now have won the Australian title twice, four consecutive Wimbledon titles and two U.S. Opens.

"It was a really big deal for us," Woodforde said of breaking the record held by John McEnroe and Peter Fleming. That pair had won seven men's doubles titles at Grand Slam tournaments since tennis' open era began in 1968.

The Woodies also have won the last three Grand Slam tournaments in a row — Wimbledon and the U.S. Open last year and now the Australian.

The French Open is the one they never have won.

"The French is one we want," Woodbridge said.

But even if they win it this year, he said, it would not be considered a real grand slam sweep since not all four victories would be in the same year.

Woodforde said that "no teams have been close" to a sweep in one year, "and I'd rather not think about it all. It's another pressure we can do without."

In the final, Woodforde had trouble getting his first serve in, getting 53 percent for the match and giving Lareau and O'Brien a chance to pounce on second serves.

"They're probably the best returning team, maybe apart from ourselves. If you miss a first serve, the second one is shoved down your throat hard, early, and you have to make tough volleys the whole time," Woodbridge said.

The victory was worth \$196,000 for the Woodies, who won 12 titles in 13 finals last year. Their titles included an Olympic gold medal.

Lareau, a Canadian, and O'Brien, an American, shared \$98,000.

Moya takes aim at Sampras

MELBOURNE (R) — First he slayed Boris Becker, then he took his giant-killing sword to Michael Chang.

On Sunday, in the men's final of the Australian Open, Spain's Carlos Moya can become a giant in his own right and the owner of a prestigious Grand Slam title.

But he has one more Goliath to slay — World No. 1 Pete Sampras.

If the 20-year-old Moya has provided the surprises in the men's draw in Melbourne — he beat defending champion Becker in the first round and World No. 2 Chang in the semifinals — Sampras has provided an element of certainty over the past two weeks.

Although he has twice been taken to five sets, once by a 19-year-old Slovakian on his Grand Slam debut, Sampras will head into the final in

confident mood after demolishing Austrian hard man Thomas Muster in Friday's semifinal.

Some tennis experts say the only chink in the Sampras armour is his stamina, so Moya's best chance may lie with the weather. If Melbourne's summer heat wave returns, the 25-year-old Sampras could start to wilt.

Moya, who will rocket from 25th in the rankings into the top 10 whatever happens, has a simpler strategy: blind confidence.

He wants to forget that he is in his first Grand Slam final against a man with eight Grand Slam crowns, that his career earnings could be doubled in a single match.

"I think one of the keys is that I don't think about 'this is a Grand Slam' and the money that I can get if I can beat him," said Moya, whose rock star good looks have made him the heart-

throb of the tournament.

"He's number one but I beat number two and number six — I'm not going on to the court as a loser."

Moya was a loser the last time he played Sampras, in an exhibition tie-break at a tennis clinic in his home town of Barcelona three years ago.

"He's come a long way since then," Sampras said on Friday.

"To beat Michael (Chang) in straight sets is not so easy to do... On an outdoor court like this, he is one of the best players in the world."

But the big difference between the two men is clear: in his 11th Grand Slam final, Sampras has experience on his side.

"I have been in the situation before, I know what to do to come out ahead," he said.

Remarkable Graf rises above scandal

BONN (R) — Steffi Graf should have easily won Germany's female sports personality-of-the-year award in 1995 and 1996.

The way the World No. 1 was able to put aside her much-publicised problems off the court and win Grand Slam after Grand Slam was one of the most remarkable performances in sport in recent years.

Yet the German media chose instead to put the tennis millionaire behind a downhill skier and shot-putter in last year's vote and behind a swimmer in 1995.

The decision said more about the player's poor relations with journalists than her sporting feats, but even her detractors admit her form in the last 18 months has been extraordinary.

Since May 23 1995 when tax authorities raided her family homes, Graf has lived every day with huge emotional stress.

Father Peter, the most influential figure in her life, sat in prison for 15 months while German authorities investigated allegations he had dodged \$11.5 million in tax on his daughter's earnings.

Stories about her father's problems with alcohol and tablets and his management of her money were spread across the newspapers virtually every day and Graf lost one of the most important and prestigious sponsorship deals in German sport.

Yet within weeks of the 1995 raids Graf won the French Open and Wimbledon. One month after her father was arrested and jailed in August 1995 with no chance of bail, she triumphed at the U.S. Open.

1996 was even more startling. While Peter Graf, a former second-hand car salesman, sat in prison, the Graf forehand continued to dominate the game, the tim-

ing as perfect as ever as she won Wimbledon and the French and U.S. Opens for the second consecutive year.

It was only last weekend — just a few days before the verdict is delivered in the tax trial on Friday — that the longest match-winning run in professional Grand Slam history ended with a fourth round defeat at the Australian Open.

"I can't think of anybody who is having a more difficult time," said Austrian Judith Wiesner after losing a U.S. Open quarter-final to Graf on the eve of the start of her father's trial in Mannheim last September.

"I don't know what she is thinking but sometimes I am amazed how anybody can shrug off all that stuff and just go out and play that well."

It was not all as easy as it looked. There were times when the 27-year-old cracked.

When questions about her father were fired at her at the 1995 U.S. Open, Graf left the winner's press conference in tears. She struggled to get through many of the rare interviews she gave during the scandal without breaking down.

Graf admitted that at times she felt like pulling out of tournaments because of the trial. But the victories were even more satisfying under the duress.

Graf called 1995 the most satisfying year of her career. She rated 1996 even higher.

"Obviously I had a lot of injuries and problems last year," Graf said at the 1996 U.S. Open. "But I think this year probably was the limit I could go to."

Graf has not always had this ability to shut out pressures from outside the game.

In 1990 when the German papers were full of stories about a scandal involving her father and a 22-year-old



German tennis star Steffi Graf arrives at Tokyo's Narita airport early January 25. A German court sentenced Steffi Graf's father Peter to three years and nine months in jail for evading tax on her earnings, but said investigations against the player should be dropped. Steffi is due to play in a tournament in Tokyo this week (Reuters photo)

nude model, Graf's form suffered.

In 1993 she admitted that the stabbing of Monica Seles in Hamburg by a fanatical Graf fan had put her under pressure.

But this time she showed maturity beyond her years.

Some cynics have joked she had to keep playing because she needed the money, but Graf has barely known anything except tennis since she began batter-

ing a ball against a wall at home at the age of four.

"It's still a pleasure to play and that's why I am still in the sport, because it means so much to me," she said.

It is true that most German journalists have had difficulties dealing with the Graf clan for many years.

But after voting her sportswoman of the year during her rise to the top in the 1980s, they failed to recognise her finest hour.

Hawks, Bulls

ATLANTA (R) — Henry James had a career-high 26 points, including 8-of-10 free throws, and Steve Smith had 13 at his 20th birthday on Saturday as the Hawks defeated the Bulls 117-105 in a home win.

Smith, who was born on Saturday, led the Hawks in scoring with 18 points, including 11-of-15 from the field.

Mutombo, who had 21 rebounds, led the Bulls in scoring with 21 points, including 11-of-15 from the field.

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Pistons trade to Blazers

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (R) — The Detroit Pistons unloaded forward Stacey Augmon Friday, sending him to the Portland Trail Blazers for guard Randolph Childress.

Augmon, who was acquired with Grant Long last July, had four conditional draft picks, but not fit in with the new team this season, averaging 4.5 points and 2.5 rebounds in just 20 games.

The 28-year-old Augmon, who won a national championship with the university

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NEW ORLEANS SHANE & LAMAR WISDOM

WHO PERFORM

North, such vulnerability. Fast

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Sports

Jordan Times, Sunday, January 26, 1997

Hawks, Magic, Nets win in overtime

ATLANTA (R) — Henry James had a career-high 26 points, including 8-of-10 three-pointers, and Steve Smith got 13 of his 20 points in overtime as the Hawks posted their 18th straight home win, 117-105 over the Washington Bullets Friday.

Dikembe Mutombo recorded his 21st double-double of the season with 23 points and 14 rebounds for the Hawks, who outscored the Bullets in the extra period 19-7.

James was a perfect 5-of-5 from beyond the arc in the third quarter, tying team records for three-pointers in a period and in a game. His eighth three-point shot forced the overtime.

"A hand was in his face, the defensive pressure was there," Washington's Juwon Howard said. "He just proved he was a pure shooter and when the game went into overtime, they definitely had the momentum. They just capitalised and won the ballgame."

Smith scored nine straight points for Atlanta, ignited by a slam dunk with 3:02 to go in OT.

"It was a situation where I got more aggressive," Smith said. "I was looking for guys and then they were looking for me."

Smith's 13 points in overtime put him just one shy of the NBA record, set by Butch Carter on March 20, 1984.

Atlanta is a perfect 8-0 against Atlantic Division opponents and 4-0 in overtime affairs this season.

Rod Strickland had a chance to win it at the buzzer in regulation but his spinning shot attempt did not fall.

In Charlotte, Glenn Rice scored 34 points — his fifth straight game with at least 30 — as the Hornets blew a 21-point lead but came back to defeat the New York Knicks 113-104 in overtime.

Rice's three-pointer off a long rebound of a Vlade Divac miss sent the game into OT after the Knicks held the Hornets to just nine points in the fourth quarter.

Dell Curry had 25 points and Divac 23 while ex-Knicks Anthony Mason had

17 points with 18 rebounds and six assists against his old team.

Patrick Ewing had 26 points and 14 rebounds and Allan Houston scored 24 points for New York. Chris Childs had a triple double with 13 points, 12 assists and 10 rebounds. Larry Johnson, acquired in the deal that sent Mason to Charlotte, had 14 points, three rebounds and five assists.

In Boston, former Celtic Brian Shaw hit a three-pointer with 28.8 seconds left in overtime and the Orlando Magic held on for a 121-117 victory over the Celts.

Anfernee Hardaway had 28 points for the Magic, who posted their third straight win at Boston. Nick Anderson added 24 points and eight rebounds, while Rony Seikaly had 22 points and 15 boards.

Rick Fox scored 28 points for Boston, as did rookie Antoine Walker, who set a career high.

In Inglewood, California, Shaquille O'Neal scored 33 points and rookie Travis Knight came off the bench to produce season highs with 16 points and 15 rebounds as the Los Angeles Lakers topped the Golden State Warriors 114-97.

Nick Van Exel had 19 points and 12 assists and rookie reserve Kobe Bryant added 17 points for the Lakers, who moved into a tie for first place in the Pacific Division with the Seattle.

Larrell Spivey scored 27 points, B.J. Armstrong added 20 and Joe Smith contributed 17 and 12 rebounds for the Warriors.

In Los Angeles, Loy Vaught scored 12 of his season-high 31 points in the first quarter.

Clippers held on for a 114-111 triumph over the Denver Nuggets.

Vaught was 15-for-18 from the field and pulled down 10 rebounds after going scoreless in a 14-minute foul-plagued performance Thursday in an upset of the Seattle SuperSonics.

Charles Outlaw added a season-high 18 points and Brent Barry tied a season best with 17 for the Clippers, who won on consecutive nights for just the second time this season.

Dale Ellis scored 27 points and Laphonso Ellis added 23 for Denver, which has lost 13 of its last 15 on the road.

In Phoenix, Gary Trent matched career highs with 24 points and 13 rebounds and Kenny Anderson added 22 points and 15 assists, leading the Portland Trail Blazers to their fifth win in seven games, 115-105 over the Suns.

Reserve Rex Chapman scored 19 points and Kevin Johnson added 18 points and 12 assists as the Suns lost their second straight home game following a five-game home winning streak.

In San Antonio, Dominique Wilkins scored 24 points and Vinny Del Negro had 21 as the Spurs defeated the Dallas Mavericks 97-87.

The Spurs won for just the second time in their last 10 games but have taken four straight at home against the Mavs.

In Philadelphia, Mitch Richmond scored 33 points as the Sacramento Kings defeated the 76ers for the fifth straight time, 107-92.

Richmond added eight assists and four steals. Corliss Williamson had 18 points and Olden Polynice added 16 and 14 rebounds for Sacramento.

NBA RESULTS

Orlando	121	Boston	117
Atlanta	117	Washington	103
Sacramento	107	Philadelphia	92
Charlotte	113	New York	104
San Antonio	97	Dallas	87
Portland	115	Phoenix	105
LA Clippers	114	Denver	111
LA Lakers	114	Golden State	97

Pistons trade Stacey Augmon to Blazers for three guards

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan (R) — The Detroit Pistons unloaded forward Stacey Augmon Friday, sending him to the Portland Trail Blazers for guards Randolph Childress, Aaron McKie and Reggie Jordan.

Augmon, who was acquired with Grant Long last July 15 from the Atlanta Hawks for four conditional draft picks, has not fit in with his new team this season, averaging 4.5 points and 2.5 rebounds in just 20 games. He has missed 12 games by coach's decision.

The 28-year-old Augmon, who won a national championship with the university

of Nevada at Las Vegas, was the ninth overall selection in the 1991 draft by Atlanta, and played his first five seasons in the league with the Hawks.

In 390 games, he averaged 13.7 points and 4.5 rebounds, while missing just 20 games — the same amount he has already missed this season — and building a reputation as a good defender.

"Stacey gives us another versatile, young, athletic player on our roster," said Portland president and general manager Bob Whitsett. "Stacey is a proven NBA player that can play two positions, and gives our roster even more depth and flexibility."

Childress was originally drafted by Detroit with the 19th overall pick in 1995, but traded to Portland with Billy Curley on September 20 for Otis Thorpe.

Childress missed most of his rookie season after undergoing left shoulder surgery, but did appear in 28 games, averaging three points per contest. He played in just 19 games this year, averaging 1.5 points.

McKie, the 17th overall pick in 1994, averaged 4.2 points, 2.3 rebounds and 2.1 assists in all 41 games this season for Portland. He averaged 10.7 points and 3.8 boards in 80 games last season, and had the longest consecutive-games-played streak (121) on the Blazers.

Jordan, who was signed as a free agent on August 30, has been on the injured list since December 27 with a non-displaced oblique fracture of the third metacarpal in his left hand. He will be placed on Detroit's active roster, and might be available right away. In nine games, he averaged 2.2 points and 2.6 rebounds.

To make room for the extra bodies, the Pistons placed guard Litteral Green on the injured list with a groin pull and, earlier this week, placed long on the list with a sprained right ankle.



Werner Franz of Austria gets some air on his way to take the second place in the classic World Cup downhill race on Streif slope. Fritz Strobl of Austria won the race in a time of 1:51.58 minutes ahead of his compatriot Werner Franz and Luc Alphand of France (Reuters photo)

Strobl wins most demanding World Cup downhill

KITZBUHEL, Austria (R) — Austria's Fritz Strobl justified his faith in himself on Saturday by clinching his second World Cup victory on the most demanding downhill slope on the men's circuit.

"I gave myself one last chance this winter. My goal was to finish among the top 15. Now I have won two races and finished third once," he said.

"I have already achieved more than I aimed for. Now I can relax and just let things happen. I know now that if I manage a good run then the results come."

"Unlike other Austrian skiers, I never dreamed of winning Kitzbuehel when I was a kid. It just seemed like such a faraway dream," he added. "I still haven't digested the win yet."

Strobl was considered an up-and-coming downhill star in 1991 before badly injuring his left knee during a continental cup race in Canada. Although he managed to find his

way back into the team, he never had good race results. He came close to being kicked out of the squad but secured a Super-G place in the World Cup after winning the discipline's Europacup.

Austrian coaches gave him a last chance at downhill this winter and he replied by winning the season's opening race in Val d'Isere when he edged out compatriot Werner Franz by 0.02 seconds.

On Saturday, Strobl performed a breathtaking run on the dreaded 3,312-metre Streif Piste to win in one minute 51.58 seconds and beat Franz into second place again — though this time with a commanding 0.57 seconds.

Strobl eclipsed compatriot Guenther Mader's course record from last year of 1:54.29 by almost three seconds, even though the piste was flagged with more gates this winter and was longer.

"I never thought it would be possible to clock a time in the 51s. But

the piste was not so hard because of the mild temperatures which allows us to be more precise in corners and therefore faster," Strobl said.

"When a slope is like a blanket of ice then it is difficult to be precise in corners. The conditions were like in spring today and spring snow is always the fastest."

Strobl is the only Austrian to have won downhill this winter and has therefore virtually guaranteed himself a starting bib at the world championships in Sestriere, Italy, which begin on February 2.

"A victory in Kitzbuehel is always worth more than medals, for the prize money alone," he said. "But a medal in Sestriere wouldn't be bad."

Strobl, Frenchman Luc Alphand and Italian Kristian Obiedina are the only men's world cup downhill winners this season.

Alphand, who won Friday's two-run sprint downhill on a shortened version of the course on the

Hahnenkamm Mountain, was pleased with third place in 1:52.20.

"It was difficult for me to concentrate this morning. I felt happy like a little child after my victory yesterday and had difficulties sleeping," said 31-year-old Alphand, who won the two Kitzbuehel downhill stages on the same day in 1995.

Alphand took the lead from Switzerland's Michael Von Gruenigen in the overall world cup standings on 637 points and also leads the downhill standings on 605 points.

"I'm happy to be leading in the standings but I will not do a third discipline because of that. I'd rather be good in two disciplines than medium in many," said Alphand, who races only downhill and Super-G.

Men's World Cup action continues in Kitzbuehel on Sunday with a slalom and the combined event.

NFL Super Bowl buildup: Really just a super grind

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Enough, already. Can't they just play the game?

The Super Bowl buildup has become nothing more than a super bore. The players can hardly wait for Sunday. The reporters are running out of questions. The dearth of news coming out of this year's championship game of the U.S. National Football League has forced a regurgitation of the same old stories — with a new twist here and there.

Here's an example: it was reported Thursday that Pete Carroll has been chosen to replace New England coach Bill Parcells.

Hey, wait a minute, doesn't Parcells still have at least one more game to coach for the Patriots? Haven't we been listening to reports about Parcells' future all week?

Aren't we all growing a little weary of this subject — and just about everything else associated with this Super Bowl?

"I've answered the same question a hundred times," Green Bay tight end Mark "Chmura" said Thursday, sitting wearily at a table as he prepared for the players' final news conference. "I'm glad this is the last day for this. Now we can just concentrate on the game."

Sports fan radio network reported that Carroll, San Francisco's defensive coordinator, will be named the Patriots' new coach when Parcells resigns after the Super Bowl. The Patriots denied the report, which was the latest incarnation of the ongoing saga concerning Parcells' future.

Here's some other big news that developed Thursday: Gerry Ausin will be the Super Bowl referee.

"There's no news to write about, which is good for the players," Chmura said. "But it's also bad for us because we have to keep talking about what happened during the season. What we want to think about is Sunday."

The Super Bowl is being played at the aptly named Superdome, but apparently the NFL players don't think it's such a super playing surface. The dome was rated the 12th-worst playing surface out of the 30 in the NFL, according to a study released Thursday by the NFL players association.

The best playing surface is Houston's stadium in Tampa, while Philadelphia's rock-

hard veterans stadium is ranked the worst.

The St. Louis Rams used the Super Bowl forum to announce that new coach Dick Vermeil has fired Steve Ortmayer, the team's vice president of football operations. Of course, that sort of news meant little to the packers and Patriots, who are starting to get a little antsy about their own business.

"We can play the game in our minds and we can see the game in our dreams," Green Bay receiver Antonio Freeman said. "But we can't play the game until Sunday."

Some players are so anxious to get on the field that they're counting points instead of counting sheep.

"I had a dream last night that I scored 10 touchdowns," said Andre Rison of the packers. "I know it is not going to happen, but I just had a dream."

New England's Keith Byars has been dreaming about the Super Bowl since he was 2 years old.

"I've been playing in this Super Bowl game ever since

the '60s, when I first picked up a football," he said. "I've been playing in this Super Bowl since the '70s when I was a teen-ager. I've been playing since the '80s when I was a young adult and just starting my career. I've been playing even in the '90s as a seasoned veteran."

"I've been playing this Super Bowl game many times

throughout my life, and I've won every time. We've blown the other team out; we've been down and we've come back. Even when I'm dreaming about it, we've been down a lot and it looked bleak, but the game never ended until I won. It's not going to end Sunday until I win the football game."

End? Hey, let's just get started.

I've been playing this Super Bowl game many times

WANTED

A YOUNG UNIVERSITY GRADUATE

A foreign international company is looking to employ a young university graduate, age around 23 years, fluent in as many languages as possible, however, fluency in Arabic and English is a must. The successful candidate shall be trained by the company to become an international trader. Location shall be probably in Amman, but training shall take place abroad. Applicants shall send a curriculum vitae with a phone number to the following address:

P.O.Box 815409, Amman 11180

WANTED

An International Company is seeking to appoint an Electrical Engineer with an extensive professional experience, preferably in installations, of not less than five years. English command is a must. Qualified candidates are invited to send their CVs detailing experience, certificates, along with references and contact address to:

P.O. Box 962031, Amman-11196, Jordan.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
A TANNAR HIRSH

WHO PEEKED?

North-South vulnerable, East deals.

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Opening lead: Ten of o
"Remarkable hand," observed the blitzer. "If the finesse is right, there's no need to take it." This was the deal that caused such a strange comment.

Note: South's conservative response to North's takeout double. Since the double was in the balancing position, it could be made on as

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Prince Bandar defends probe into bombing

WASHINGTON (AP) — A day after unusual U.S. criticism of its key military ally, Saudi Arabia's envoy to Washington on Friday defended his country's investigation into the bombing of a military complex that killed 19 U.S. troops.

In a statement released by the Saudi embassy, Ambassador Prince Bandar Ben Sultan underlined the strength and importance of U.S.-Saudi ties and said close cooperation between officials from both countries would continue.

The statement came a day after Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director Louis Freeh criticized Saudi Arabia for frustrating U.S. efforts to determine responsibility for the June 25 bombing in Dhahran. U.S. Attorney-General Janet Reno joined Mr. Freeh in complaining that Saudi Arabia had failed to turn over key information.

Mr. Freeh's remarks, published in Thursday's Washington Post, was an unusually public criticism of a key military ally and, a turnaround in the Clinton administration's public position on Saudi Arabia's willingness to cooperate.

However, newly appointed Secretary of State Madeleine Albright stepped tough questions at a news conference on Friday on the extent of Saudi Arabia's cooperation.

U.N. chief wins praise and promises but cash may be another story

WASHINGTON (AP) — During his fence-mending visit here, new U.N. Chief Kofi Annan won praise from congressional sceptics and promises to help revitalize the United Nations. But a hard battle lies ahead before praise turns into cash.

Mr. Annan spent three days telling President Clinton and leaders of Congress that the United Nations is finally committed to the sweeping reforms that the last three U.S. administrations have demanded.

That was a message that conservative U.N. critics on Capitol Hill wanted to hear. "I believe the secretary-general brings a remarkable depth of experience and a refreshingly new attitude in working with the United States," House Speaker Newt Gingrich said. "We are deeply committed to a strong, effective, reformed U.N. system."

The soft-spoken, 58-year-old Ghanaian was elected secretary-general last month after congressional opposition to Boutros Ghali prompted the Clinton administration to veto him for a second term.

Mr. Annan's mission in Washington, which ended Friday, was to convince congressional leaders that he is a U.N. chief with whom they can work and to persuade them to pay the millions and millions of dollars the United States owes.

By all accounts, Mr.

The New York Times reported on Saturday that Mr. Freeh's remarks surprised "just about every senior official in the Clinton administration."

The paper said top officials at the White House, the Pentagon, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and the State Department were not forewarned of the remarks, did not approve them and, in fact, some would have advised against them.

Mr. Ben Sultan did not refer specifically to Mr. Freeh's comments, but issued his statement "in response to press inquiries."

"We have always reached agreement on a broad and significant range of issues. Excellent working relations exist between officials of both countries at all levels. That close cooperation will continue," he said.

Mr. Ben Sultan underlined his country's responsibility for investigating crimes committed on its soil and said security questions "cannot be worked out through the media."

The Times reported that Pentagon officials said they were annoyed they were not informed of Mr. Freeh's dissatisfaction with the investigation before General John Shalikashvili, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, had a rare visit with King Fahd two weeks ago and did not press the issue.



CHECHENS PRAY: Elderly Chechen men pray near a destroyed building in Grozny after an election rally of commander Shamil Basayev. Presidential and parliamentary elections will be held in the break-away Russian region of Chechnya on Monday (see inside) (Reuters photo)

Qatar hopes for deal with Bahrain

DOHA (R) — A senior Qatari official expressed hope on Friday that Qatar and Bahrain would sign an agreement at the weekend to end their war of words over a territorial dispute after Doha accepted an amendment proposed by Manama.

"We have accepted Bahrain's amendment and now we hope the agreement will be signed at the end of this week in Saudi Arabia," the Foreign Ministry official told Reuters.

The deal commits the two neighbours to halt their media war over potentially oil and gas-rich Gulf islands and reefs held by Bahrain since the 1930s but also claimed by Qatar.

Qatari officials said Bahrain insisted that its acceptance of the deal must not be construed as an endorsement of Qatar's action in taking the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague, an action which Manama opposes bitterly.

Bahrain has demanded that a clause be added to the agreement clarifying that it will also not affect Manama's stand on the case at the ICJ, the officials said. Manama insists on a regional solution.

The deal has been brokered by a mediation committee of foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates set up last month by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), an economic and political alliance to which Bahrain and Qatar also belong.

The committee failed to convince the two states to come to an agreement during two meetings in Riyadh earlier this month.

Ties were further strained last month after Bahrain accused two Qataris of spying — which Doha denied — and boycotted a GCC summit in Qatar. Bahrain later pardoned the two Qataris.

Peru pledges peaceful end to crisis amid police manoeuvres

LIMA (Agencies) — Peruvian Prime Minister Alberto Fujimori pledged on Saturday the government would ensure a peaceful solution to the 39-day hostage crisis despite recent police activity outside the besieged Japanese embassy's residence.

"We are going to take the time needed to reach a peaceful solution to this crisis without bloodshed," said Mr. Fujimori.

In addition, Mr. Fujimori stopped visits to prisoners and suspended the work of an ombudsman who had been reviewing sentences handed down by much-criticised terrorist courts.

The Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) has accused the government of preparing for a storming of the Japanese ambassador's home by staging police manoeuvres around the building in recent days.

Armoured vehicles have approached the residence, while a helicopter has flown overhead and police officers have drawn up to the walls in an apparent effort to unnerve the rebels.

"What the police are doing is impose more security in the zone," said Mr. Fujimori. "Let's not forget that probably shortly there will be conversations (between the two sides) and probably also the freeing of hostages and the exit from the residence of the members of the self-styled MRTA."

"The people who come out will have to be well protected, especially the members of the MRTA, and that is the responsibility of the police."

Peru's government is meanwhile transferring the wife of Nestor Cerpa, the leader of rebels holding 73 elite hostages, to an isolated prison high in the freezing Andes mountains as part of its hard line.

As the prolonged hostage crisis has stretched into a sixth week, President Alberto Fujimori's national police have begun harassing rebels

inside the Japanese embassy compound by boarding up a door, throwing stones into the compound and driving a massive armoured personnel carrier past it.

The top demand of the rebels has been the release of 440 jailed comrades, which Mr. Fujimori has repeatedly refused to even discuss. His younger brother Pedro is one of the hostages.

After police manoeuvres early Friday, International Red Cross spokeswoman Cecilia Baux said the group could no longer deliver food and water to the hostages.

But dinner arrived at the residence a few hours later, and Ms. Baux said: "The only thing we can say is that we have received the security guarantees that we need to continue our work."

Red Cross Chief Michel Minnig was visibly angry as he emerged from the residence after his regular visit on Friday.

"If there is tension inside or outside, in addition to compromising the hostages, it also compromises us because we cannot do our humanitarian work," he said in a radio interview.

As the crisis entered its 40th day, Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto said he was pessimistic that it would be quickly resolved.

Asked Saturday if there were any prospects for an early breakthrough, Japanese officials said Mr. Hashimoto replied: "There are no prospects."

The rebels' prominent captives include Japanese Ambassador Morihisa Aoki, Japanese executives, two Peruvian cabinet ministers and five Peruvian lawmakers. Progress towards a negotiated settlement is at a standstill.

Serbia bans independent TV station

BELGRADE (AFP) — In the latest tussle over control of the Serbian media, the authorities have banned a local independent television station from broadcasting, prompting opposition protests, the independent news agency BETA said Saturday.

It said Kanal 4, which broadcasts from the town of Bajina Basta, had its frequency taken away on the basis that "it interfered with the frequencies used by the army and police in the region."

In a statement, the local branch of the Serbian Renewal movement, one of the members of the opposition together coalition, accused the authorities of wanting to "provoke trouble in the towns where the opposition won local elections by taking over the independent media."

Bajina Basta is a town of 10,000 people on the Drina River, in western Serbia on its border with Bosnia, and was one of the few towns where the victory of the opposition in Nov. 17 local elections was not contested.

At least seven people were injured when police broke up a demonstration Thursday in the town, another place won without subsequent contest by the opposition in the elections.

The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has urged the Serbian authorities to recognise opposition victories in 14 other towns and cities.

So far the authorities have recognised victories in seven, but in some cases, including Belgrade, these decisions have been submitted to a dizzying number of appeals and counter-appeals.

France on Saturday condemned the violence that broke out in Kragujevac and urged the Serbian government not to hide behind the judiciary, with a foreign ministry spokesman saying Paris "strongly deplored" the incident.

"The Yugoslav authorities seem not to have realised the seriousness of the situation. The Serbian government cannot continue hiding behind delaying judicial procedures," the spokesman said.

Meanwhile in Belgrade, about 200 doctors joined students protesting in the streets, receiving a warm ovation as they did so.

"We have come here to pro-

tect symbolically their fight because they are the future of our country," explained Radmilo Roncevic, 58, a surgeon at the capital's central hospital.

Mr. Roncevic, who like his colleagues wore a white doctor's coat and stethoscope, lined up in front of a cordon of anti-riot police who have orders to prevent opposition supporters from marching in the streets. Vuk Draskovic, one of the opposition's leaders, warned protesters Saturday that Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic's policies could leave Serbia as divided as the former Yugoslavia.

He said Mr. Milosevic "wants to play again his patriotic game of 1991" — the year war broke out — by stirring up trouble in places such as the southern province of Kosovo, which is predominantly ethnic Albanian.

"If he doesn't stop, Serbia will end up as 'united' as the former Yugoslavia," Mr. Draskovic said.

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Turkey threatens to sue German judge

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey said Saturday that it would sue a German judge who accused Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller and other cabinet members of protecting heroin smugglers, unless he apologises or releases evidence supporting his claim.

"Turkey will keep its right to appeal to (German) justice against the judge unless he announces evidence or apologies," the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a written statement.

"Turkey expects the judge to either bring forward evidence to prove his claim or apologise without any further delay," said a statement faxed to news organisations.

"Turkey reserves its right to go to court if the judge does not offer proof or apologise," the statement said.

The controversy was sparked by Frankfurt trial Judge Rolf Schwalbe on Tuesday as three drug runners were sentenced to prison after a three-month case.

Judge Schwalbe said German investigators had found evidence that two families controlling the smuggling of heroin into Europe were "protected" by the Turkish government and that they have especially close contacts with Mrs. Ciller.

He made the claims Tuesday during a hearing in which three Turks were convicted of transporting eight kilograms of heroin.

Both Istanbul families had "excellent relations" with the Turkish government and "personal contacts" with Mrs. Ciller, a former prime minister, Judge Schwalbe said, adding that this situation had seriously complicated investigations.

Ankara has denounced the remarks and formally asked the German government to give an explanation.

"We regret the grave accusation brought about by a German judge against the Turkish government with no supporting evidence," Saturday's Foreign Ministry statement said.

"As long as the accusation is not supported by concrete information and documents, it will remain as a slander," it said.

"It is also expected that in line with the friendly relations with Turkey, the German government urgently handles this issue and prevents the violation of the basic principles of law under the pretext of the courts' independence," it said.

The German government has so far kept a low profile. But German officials quoted by the Turkish press have said the German courts were independent and that remarks by magistrates were not binding on the government.

Indian wins \$136,000 in UAE raffle

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A low-paid Indian worker in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has won 500,000 dirhams (\$136,000) just after he flew home to get married, local newspapers reported on Saturday. K.M. Basheer bought a raffle ticket at the Abu Dhabi airport duty free shop while he was on his way to Calcutta last week, they said. He won the sum in a draw at the airport on Thursday while he is still in India. Basheer works as a low-paid helper at an Abu Dhabi-based maintenance company. He is the second worker from that firm to have won the prize in the monthly raffle in six months, the papers said.

Prisoners slip away for beer, sex

ATLANTA (R) — Six unsupervised prison inmates were in hot water after slipping away from a roadside work detail to drink beer and have sex, the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported. The prisoners, all minimum-security inmates, were left on their own by a guard while laying down hay alongside a road near the Carroll County correctional facility in West Georgia. The guard and another inmate went off to fetch gravel. A woman living in a nearby trailer initially said four of the prisoners raped her while two others watched, but she later withdrew the charges, according to state officials. The inmates told prison officials the woman had called to them from her front-door step and offered them beer. The blood-alcohol level of one prisoner, measured 0.12, which was beyond the limit set by the state for declaring someone drunk.

Family buys bible video, gets porn movie

TOULOUSE, France (R) — A French family that had bought a video cassette of the Bible found itself watching a Spanish X-rated movie instead after deliveries got mixed up, the publisher said. Larousse Publishers, known for its dictionaries and encyclopaedias, said children in Lezignan-Corbières village in southern France realised something was wrong after starting the tape, a film entitled "El Corredor Del Hombre" (man's passage). "We entrusted the copying of our cassettes to an editor who mistakenly supplied us with the remainder of a stock of erotic tapes which had not yet been labelled and which was destined for a Spanish customer," said Edith Flaichre, head of marketing at Larousse. "We are going to withdraw all the tapes from sale in the region immediately and we will replace them with models which have been checked by us," she added.

Vungee jump cancelled after fatality

NEW ORLEANS (R) — A bungee-jumping stunt planned for the finale of the Super Bowl half-time show was cancelled, 13 hours after an entertainer rehearsing the act died of massive head injuries. National Football League Commissioner Paul Tagliabue told a news conference: "That part of the finale will be omitted from the show for obvious reasons." Earlier he said officials did not know why Laura Patterson, 43, of Sarasota, Florida, hit the floor with her head. She was pronounced dead of massive head injuries at a hospital. Although details have not been finalised, he said, "we will take note of Mrs. Patterson's death and commiserate her life." He said an investigation was under way to determine if the accident was caused by human error or equipment failure.

U.S. expects better Saudi co-

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. State Department on Saturday said it expects Saudi Arabia to cooperate more fully in the investigation of the June 25 bombing in Dhahran. The State Department said it was "encouraged" by Saudi Arabia's willingness to cooperate in the investigation. The State Department said it was "encouraged" by Saudi Arabia's willingness to cooperate in the investigation. The State Department said it was "encouraged" by Saudi Arabia's willingness to cooperate in the investigation.

Abducted Jordanian released in Beirut

DOHA (R) — A Jordanian man abducted in Lebanon since January has been released and is on his way to Beirut, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced Saturday. A Jordanian man abducted in Lebanon since January has been released and is on his way to Beirut, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced Saturday. A Jordanian man abducted in Lebanon since January has been released and is on his way to Beirut, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced Saturday.

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U.N. keeps flag over Kurd camp in Iraq

GENEVA (R) — The United Nations refugee agency UNHCR said on Friday that it would not remove its flag over a troubled Turkish Kurd refugee camp in northern Iraq, saying it would remain as a symbol of protection for 15,000 Kurds there.

The UNHCR this month left Atrush camp — which Turkey says is a base for guerrillas of the independence-seeking Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) — saying Kurdish rebels among the refugees were blocking its work.

UNHCR pulled out of Atrush on Jan. 21, acknowledging the presence of PKK rebels in the camp, to whom it refers as activists, after repeated calls from Turkey for the separation of rebels from refugees and closure of the camp.

The controversial Atrush affair has caused embarrassment to the world refugee body at a time when it is also under fire for not doing anything to separate headline Huru militiamen from Rwandan refugees in sprawling camps in Zaire and Tanzania.

Atrush, 60 kilometres from the Turkish border, was set up in 1994 for Kurds fleeing into northern Iraq from southeast Turkey, where villagers are caught in the middle of a dirty guerrilla war between Turkish troops and the PKK.

More than 21,000 people have died in the 12-year-old war.

Kurdish groups held talks with UNHCR officials in recent days in Geneva and appealed to the agency not to pull out of the camp.

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